

# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

\$2.00

SPRING 1981

NUMBER 38



# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

(ISSN: 0036-8577)

P.O. BOX 11408  
PORTLAND, OR 97211

PHONE: (503) 282-0381

Formerly THE ALIEN CRITIC

FEBRUARY 1981 --- VOL.10, No.1

WHOLE NUMBER 38

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PUBLISHED QUARTERLY  
FEB., MAY, AUG., NOV.

SINGLE COPY --- \$2.00

COVER BY STEPHEN FABIAN

ALIEN THOUGHTS  
BY THE EDITOR.....4

THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT  
ESSAYS ON SF IN THE EIGHTIES  
BY BARRY N. MALZBERG.....6

AND THEN I READ....  
BY THE EDITOR.....11

A STRING OF DAYS  
BY GREGORY BENFORD.....14

THE VIVISECTOR  
BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER.....21

THE ALIEN INVASION  
BY LARRY NIVEN.....23

NOISE LEVEL  
A COLUMN BY JOHN BRUNNER.....24

INTERVIEW: JACK WILLIAMSON  
CONDUCTED BY NEAL WILGUS.....26

SMALL PRESS NOTES  
BY THE EDITOR.....30

CYBORG BLUES  
A POEM BY NEAL WILGUS.....32

TEN YEARS AGO IN SF  
A FEATURE BY ROBERT SABELLA.....32

SHORT FICTION REVIEWS  
ANALOG---PATRICIA MATHEWS.....33  
F&SF---RUSSELL ENGBRETSON.....34  
OMNI---MARGANA B. ROLAIN.....35  
SMALL PRESS---DARRELL SCHWEITZER.....36  
ASIMOV'S---ROBERT SABELLA.....38

MY TWO CENTS' WORTH  
BY F.M. BUSBY.....39

LETTERS.....40

HARLAN ELLISON  
MICHAEL MOORCOCK  
ROBERT BLOCH  
JACK WILLIAMSON  
CHRISTOPHER PRIEST  
FRED SINGER  
STEVEN GRANT  
TONY DAVIS  
NEVILLE J. ANGOVE  
RONALD R. LAMBERT  
DARRELL SCHWEITZER  
ED MESKYS  
JAMES VAN HISE  
STANLEY SCHMIDT  
ROBERT COULSON  
GREGORY BENFORD  
IAN COVELL

AND THEN I SAW....  
BY THE EDITOR.....51  
(AND ALAN DEAN FOSTER)

OTHER VOICES.....53  
BOOK REVIEWS

BY PAULETTE MINARE'  
LYNNE HOLIDAY  
DEAN R. LAMBE  
ELTON T. ELLIOTT  
FREDERICK PATTEN  
JOHN DIPRETE  
ALLEN VARNEY  
WILLIAM GIBSON  
STEVE LEWIS  
MICHAEL VERNON MACKAY  
NEAL WILGUS  
KEITH SOLTYS

THE HUMAN HOTLINE  
SF NEWS  
BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT.....61



INTERIOR ART-----

ALEXIS GILLILAND---3, 14, 15, 16, 17,  
18, 19, 21, 23, 39, 41, 43, 46, 50, 53, 58  
59, 61, 62, 64  
TIM KIRK---4, 11, 24, 30, 51, 67, 68, 2  
ALLEN KOSZOWSKI---7,  
OLE PETTERSON---8  
GEORGE KOCHELL---10, 20, 34, 53  
RICHARD BRUNING---12, 13, 22  
MIKE GILBERT---25, 42  
RANDY MOHR---26, 27, 28  
ROBERT LIEBERMAN---32, 42, 43  
PAUL CHADWICK---33, 37  
KURT ERICHSEN---38  
BRUCE CONKLIN---40, 50  
KURT REICHEL---44  
GEORGE M. O'NALE---47  
ROBERT WHITAKER---48  
RANDY RUSTIN---55  
JOHN MUNDY---56

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THE ALIEN CRITIC  
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW  
Available in microform from:  
OXFORD MICROFORM PUBLICATIONS, LTD  
Wheatshaf Yard, Blue Boar Street  
Oxford OX1 4EY, United Kingdom

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW is published at 1525 NE Ainsworth, Portland, OR 97211.

NO ADVERTISING WILL BE ACCEPTED  
Second Class Postage Paid  
at Portland, OR 97208

# REVIEWS-----

STARSHIP WOMEN.....	11
DIRECT DESCENT.....	11
WHITE LIGHT.....	11
WHO KILLED UTOPIA.....	11
THE TRAVAILS OF JANE SAINT.....	11
THE DESCENDANTS OF STAR.....	11
DREAM MAKERS.....	11
THREE-RING PSYCHUS.....	11
PROSE BOWL.....	11
AN ENEMY OF THE STATE.....	11
FREDDY'S BOOK.....	11
THE LAST DEFENDER OF CAMELOT.....	11
THE RAGGED EDGE OF SCIENCE.....	11
SAMUEL R. DELANY: PRIMARY & SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	22
ROGER ZELAZNY: A PRIMARY & SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	22
JULES VERNE: A PRIMARY & SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	22
KIRK'S WORKS--AN INDEX.....	30
FANTASY NEWSLETTER #32.....	30
WONDER WART-HOG AND THE NURDS OF NOVEMBER.....	30
CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNI- VERSE, VOL. 5: BRAINS AND BRONZE--THE RISE OF ANCIENT GREECE.....	30
THE SIXTH BOOK OF VIRGIL FINLAY PONG #1.....	30
NEW LIBERTARIAN MANIFESTO.....	30
THE MUCKRAKER'S MANUAL.....	31
HOW TO ORGANIZE AND MANAGE YOUR OWN RELIGIOUS CULT.....	31
THE WORLD POWER FOUNDATION-- ITS GOALS AND PLATFORM.....	31
SCIENCE FICTION - A REVIEW OF SPECULATIVE LITERATURE #4.....	31
LIVING FREE.....	31
THE SPACEGAMER #32.....	31
SF COMMENTARY #60/61.....	31
NOT MELLOW.....	31
THE COLONISTS #1.....	31
ANALOG--Nov-Dec-Jan.....	31
F&SF--Oct-Nov-Dec.....	31
OMNI.....	31
SMALL PRESS MAGAZINES.....	31
FANTASY TALES.....	31
NIGHT VOYAGES.....	31
THE ANTHOLOGY OF SPECULATIVE POETRY.....	31
DARK FANTASY.....	31
GOTHIC.....	31
ETERNITY.....	31
ASIMOV'S--Oct-Nov-Dec.....	31
THE STUNTMAN.....	31
THE AWAKENING.....	31
FADE TO BLACK.....	31
TERROR TRAIN.....	31
CABO BLANCO.....	31
PRIVATE EYES.....	31
HERO AT LARGE.....	31
WILLIE & PHIL.....	31
THE BOOGEY MAN.....	31
IT'S MY TURN.....	31
LOVING COUPLES.....	31
FLASH GORDON.....	31
THE WANTING FACTOR.....	31
THE GROITTO OF THE FORMIGANS.....	31
UTOPIA 3.....	31
STAR LOOT.....	31
THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ.....	31
A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS.....	31
WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN?.....	31

THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY.....	30
THE INTEGRATED MAN.....	30
THE MIND GAME.....	30
THE FLUTE-PLAYER.....	30
PORT OF SAINTS.....	30
HAUNTED.....	30
RATNER'S STAR.....	30
THOUSANDSTAR.....	30
WORLD ENOUGH, AND TIME.....	30
MIRROR FRIEND, MIRROR FOE.....	30
THE LURE OF THE BASILISK.....	30
HOMEWORLD.....	30
SHADOWMAN.....	30
THE PURPLE PTERODACTYLS.....	30
INCREDIBLE COINCIDENCE.....	30
THE GAME OF LIFE.....	30
MEDUSA'S CHILDREN.....	30
THE MAN WHO CORRUPTED EARTH.....	30
THE REVOLVING BOY.....	30



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## Next Issue....

INTERVIEWS WITH  
GENE WHELAN  
AND  
MICHAEL WHELAN  
PLUS SOME SURPRISES

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

BUT WHY DOES  
GEIS REALLY  
WANT MY OLD  
ZIP CODE?



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# ALIEN THOUGHTS

## BY THE EDITOR

### SOUR GRIPES

Over the years I have kept my peace...suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous morons...

I am accused often of running a prozine here. SFR it is said, actually (horrors!) pays some of its contributors...and Geis actually admits he makes a (shudder) profit every issue. How can this profiteer, this capitalist cur, this fascist dementedrodder of the poor amateur fanzine publisher get away with winning Hugos so often? Is there [they lament] no justice?

The answer is that no, there is no justice. Only idealists, Liberals and some of the inexperienced believe there is justice in life.

But back to prodrom and The Taint of Profit in SFR. Let me make this perfectly clear: I estimate I make about \$300 per month from SFR. I also make a small stipend from REG and about \$1200. per self-published 500-copy edition sf/sex novel I put out. This, plus the help Paulete provides for the utilities, some food, etc., and the interest from savings keeps the wolf from the door (though he remains, snarling, down at the corner).

Net income last year was less than \$5000.

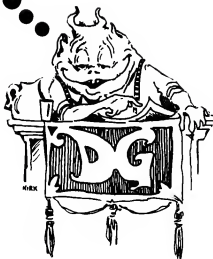
When I was writing novels full time I made double and triple this amount---and that was years ago when a dollar was worth a whole 50¢.

I pay as few of the contributors to SFR as possible. Because if I paid everyone (especially the reviewers, now) I'd wipe out the entire profit margin and would be forced to stop publishing and go to work for a living.

As George Jessel might say, "Mmm...fan publishing is my life." if he were a fan. I am and it is.

Without naming names, I note sourly that most of those who bitch about SFR's "prozine" qualities are very eager to trade with me; they send awful little crudzines and expect to get SFR every issue, on the assumption that in this respect (to their advantage) I am a fanzine publisher and honor the ancient obligation of trading at least one-for-one or all-for-all.

But they don't send their small mimeo'd effort to ANALOG or OMNI or even AMAZING and expect to trade.



They know the difference, all right. They just want to have it both ways, if possible, with me.

But these occasional bites on the leg irk me, piss me, croggle my greeps.

I comfort myself with the knowledge that soon these bugs will be gone. I survive. I continue. I outlast the bastards--and bitches.

Please note that I didn't win a Hugo in 1980. This troubled me a bit at first, but I shrugged--

"You nearly shit bricks, Geis! You roared around the house tearing your remaining hair and shouted curses and maledictions upon the heads of Charlie Brown and Bob Shaw. It was so---"

Alter! I forbid you to---  
"---hideous a performance I had to cut my sensors to the bone. I thought you were going to---"

---reveal... Damn you! Keep out of the editorials! You'll have your precious reviews to cavort in!

"Geis, you've got to face the fact of your disease. You've got a terminal case of Hugo Greeditis, and only death will cure it."

YOU...WILL...NOT...SAY...ANOTHER...WORD!

"I mean, all that bragging about wanting fifteen Hugos... That was rather gross, Geis. I---"

I'll use the exorcism. Alter, if I have to! You'll be confined to the nether brain for thirty days on used synapses and venous blood. One more word---

Alter?

Alter-Ego?

Hal! I knew that would scare

him out of here. Now, where was I?

"Lying, as usual, about money, power and Hugoes."

Oh, yeah....uh? DAMN YOU, ALTER!

I was saying that I did lose perspective for a while... It is true that I had come to expect to win at least one Hugo every year.

But now, chastened, humbled, eating loser's pie, I see now that I was hubritic [new word] to a sickening degree. [Hubricious?]

"And now you only expect a Hugo every other year, eh, Geis?"

"Yes...NO! Get out of this editorial before I get really a-n-g-r-y!!! Now, where is that incantation? Had it pinned to the wall.... Ah, there.

Wid evokun allienum in oven  
dis lactarium hades...

"Urrgh...blechh...well, if you put it that way, Geis...."

Gone?

"Gone."

Okay. I have nothing more to say. Except that I could publish SFR without paying a cent to any contributors. It wouldn't be quite as good in certain respects, but perhaps better in others. I could be pure as the driven Trufan and still put out a better, more interesting zine than anybody. But I refuse ads now, don't I? I trade, don't I? I have accepted a Trufanish vow of poverty haven't I? GREAT GOOD IN HEAVEN, WHAT MORE DO THEY WANT?

So fuck'm. From now on, no more Mr. Nice Guy! Attack my amateur standing at your own risk! I have spoken.

I AM RICHARD E. GEIS! I SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM SHIT!

POLICY, POLICY...WHO'S GOT THE POLICY STATEMENT?

YOU DO, GEIS.

OH.

I am, as you will note of these writs, broadening the scope, widening the range, stretching the fence of what I review, note and discuss in these unallowed pages.

It has been my perception that SFR is/has become too...too much devoted to sf and fantasy. As far as my contributions go. Others are commanded to stick to their lasts. [If the shoe fits...]

So here there be items of various and sundry subject. That's my privilege.

I'll be reviewing films of all types...everything I see.

The variety in Small Press Notes will widen.

And in future issues Ghod only knows what I'll review in my book review columns.

[Of course, I receive very few books for review that are not sf/fantasy/occult, so don't expect too much variety in that direction, come to think. Me, BUY a book?]

#### THE FORCE MAJEURE

A major publishing house on the East coast has signaled a drastic change in policy to book-stores: No Returns; if you order it you keep it.

They have come to the same conclusion I did in the Fall of 1979; it's simpler, and in the long run more profitable, to make each sale final; no exchanges, no credits, no returns. This saves incredible amounts of labor, bookkeeping, and headaches. It gives a truer, swifter knowledge of sales and trends. It assures a perhaps smaller (but harder) profit.

That's the force of The Market at work, even in the casual, snobbish, often byzantine book biz.

Of course, this major publisher does not [as yet?] require advance payment on all orders and is thus vulnerable to a possibly huge loss in unpaid and uncollectable accounts.

In the next six months I expect a lot of publishers to be cut to the bone by the conglomerates which bought them a few years ago. Vast holding companies are merciless when it comes to cutting losses and getting rid of no-profit operations.

The next leg down in this recession/depression will see lots of blood in Publishers Row in NY.

Come to that, I expect to see at least two sf magazines fail in 1981-82. But then, I'm an optimist.

[Which two? AMAZING and F&SF.]

#### TOI KING & THE GESTETNER

As many of you know, I've been mimeographing my homemade sex/sf novels, using the trusty Gestetner I bought in Santa Monica about ten years ago. But the time has come to phase out good ol' You Sonovabitch and restrict him to doing subscription and order forms.

His ink pump is leaking again, and of the 100 tubes of 419 black ink I bought in 1970, only a few tubes remain. I bought those for about \$4.50 per tube. Now...NOW

419 black is somewhere around \$10 per tube.

Considering the cost of a rebuilt ink gun, and new ink, and mimeo paper, it becomes only a little more expensive to have Action Print do my next novel in reduced print this size, two columns.

There likely will be another Toi King adventure: her persecution, imprisonment and eventual triumph over the fanatic religion of Cholb.

And next time I'll have the novel written before I announce it. I was over a week late in mailing out the copies of THE CORPORATION STRIKES BACK which were promised for Dec. 15. The original deadline was November 15. Things like that bother me.

STAR WHORES LIVES! In SFR #36 I listed only 20 copies left of that novel, and sure enough, about 45 people ordered it. We usually add issues to the late-orderer's subscription, instead.

THEN, after SFR #37 went to press, I was mooching around under the mimeo work table in the other half of the basement [This half used to be two Party Rooms. If the architect and builder could see them now!] and found to my horror and pleasure, an extra box of copies of STAR WHORES.

So...there is one more opportunity to get the first Toi King sex/sf adventure. \$4. per copy. I'll autograph it for free, if you wish. I now count 68 copies of STAR WHORES available. And that, I promise you, is all there are!

#### ALTER GOT SCREAMED AGAIN

I know I promised him a page in which to rave, but...well...a funny thing happened on the way to the layout table.

Actually, it happened earlier. I did a series of thumbs-down reviews and thought I'd run those as his. But they were in standard review format, and that (afterward) didn't seem to be Alter-Ego's style. Time, in the meanwhile, was Lorenz - Fitzgeraldalping past me with FIL speed, and the looming DEADLINE was grinding me to a pulp.

This explanation is a bit esoteric, I fear. Actually, I'm no longer at home with Alter. He...he embarrasses me. And, too, I'm becoming tougher in my own write, able to pan tall books with a single phrase. Well...a single paragraph.

So I feel I don't need Alter-Ego no more. I have hardened, become occasionally vicious when need arises.

As proof of my new emotional fiber I am able to exorcize Alter.

See? No acidic interjections from him. No insults. I have incorporated all his lovably malicious qualities into my character and am now a sweetheart/vicious bastard.

There are those of you who think I have been a VICIOUS BASTARD/sweetheart all along. To those people I have only one thing to say.

You may be right. So it goes.

#### A PLEAZING PLETHORA

Is what I've got. It's the same old story you've heard before and will hear again. Editorials like this are a form of therapy for me, a kind of confessional...

You see, Father, I had every intention of using all those reviews. The issue didn't seem very crowded at first, but...

I did away with the bacofer illustration to free up one more page for the book reviews, but....

I know I promised several people their words would appear in this issue, and I'll...I'll do better next issue. I promise.

In the meantime I must prostitute myself before these long-suffering contributors and must bash my head against the floor and whine and beg forgiveness and tear my hair and roll in ashes and cow dung and all like that. [After doing it a dozen times it isn't so bad...in fact...]

So, Father, my agonized apologies to Michael Vernon McKay

Steven Edward McDonald

Ronald R. Lambert

Tom Staicer

Andrew Tidmarsh

Andrew M. Andrews

Sue Beckman

Pat Mathews

W. Ritchie Benedict

Donn Vicha

Nicholas Santelli

My shame is unlimited, my humiliation total, my guilt overwhelming. I may just go upstairs and o.d. on pistachio nut ice cream.

I am of course pleased---pleased to have so many quality reviewers sending their efforts to SFR. I thank them. I list below the titles of books reviewed which will appear next issue so help me ghod, may Ghu's lightning strike me down where I sit----

ZZZZZZZZZZAAAPPP!!!

Ha, missed me again!

--if I lie.

SPACE WARS---WORLDS & WEAPONS  
THE SPACE MAVERICKS



# **THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT**

**BY BARRY N. MALZBERG**

# BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ENGINES OF THE NIGHT

These essays on science fiction were written and compiled by a writer whose first science fiction appeared in the late nineteen-sixties, who rose to minor prominence in the early to mid-seventies, watched his career suddenly (and not entirely for reasons of his own doing) plummet in the middle of the decade and who spent the last years of that decade lurching toward the Bethlehem of the eighties not so much trying to be born as to assess the roughness of the beast. The career in many ways paralleled the arc of political and social revisionism through that period, the questioning of institutions and institutional cliché, the sudden shaking of those institutions and then, after Nixon's eviction in the middle of the period a speedy and effective counter-revolution which gave some of the invaders a rough ride out of the temple.

I have not had (Lord knows!) the most successful or prominent career in science fiction in the seventies but I have had, I think, the most clearly symptomatic, the career which did indeed, as implied above, most parallel and survive in reaction to the larger political and social developments of the time. The perspective is peculiarly mine; I make no claims for its universality but certainly for its particularity: no one else at the beginning of the new decade could regard science fiction quite this way. Any one of us who read or write in the field could make that statement of course, but if there is particular cachet in this perspective it may be because it is, more than the careers of most science fiction writers, metaphorical.

And then, perhaps it is not: my career is no way for a young science fiction writer to go; I am no model of a Modern Major General. Reading and writing a lot of science fiction over a long period of time (and it has been, folks, a long p.o.t. hereabouts) will if nothing else grant a certain humility, modestly garbed in sackcloth and cosmetized with ashes I sally beyond the mirror at my own risk now and hardly in a spirit of adventure.

But never, as I kept on reminding myself, through the decade had had ambitions which were initially large-scale. Science fiction had never really been an adventure but an experiment. How far could I go, what could I get done, what could I say, how much could I publish before they caught on? was my basic question.

I found out.

1980: New Jersey

## SOME NOTES TOWARD THE TRUE AND THE TERRIBLE

I first referred to the true and terrible unwritten history of science fiction in a review of James Gunn's *ALTERNATE WORLDS: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY* in 1974 but did not begin to develop the concept until I spoke at UCal Berkeley in 1978. Standing at the podium, shaking with fever, ampicillin, dread and wonderment that any stranger would pay \$3.75 cash on the barrelhead to listen to me (there were about 40 such remarkable souls in the audience) I said that the history of science fiction must, almost by definition, largely exist in the interstices; that almost by definition the field could be truly explained only by material which would be by turns libelous, private, intuitive or paranoid and that even the most rigorous and lucid of scholarly works could only deal with the symptomatic representations of the great underside of the field.

I must have been anticipating in that speech the publication a year and a half later of the dense, scholarly and invaluable *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION* edited by Peter Nicholls (the best reference work on our field which has appeared to date) because the Nicholls work manages in one intricate and exhaustive volume to make clear to insiders and outsiders alike practically everything about science fiction that they would need to know to get through the doctoral orals except for two factors: a) How it got this way, b) why it has its peculiar and binding effect

upon a readership a larger proportion of which are emotionally involved with the literature than the readers of any other genre. The *ENCYCLOPEDIA* reminds me of the one-line criticism of Shaw's plays (perhaps it was Menckel but I am not sure) that a literate alien could, from them alone, learn everything that it needed to know about humanity except that it possessed genitals. Nicholls and his staff make everything about science fiction perfectly comprehensible except for the existence of a 700,000-word trade paperback in definition and explanation which can expect to sell through the life of its copy-



right well over two million copies. (Try that in quality lit, mystery, Western or romance. THE *GOthic ENCYCLOPEDIA*? THE *ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SERIOUS WRITING*? BARLOW'S BOOK OF FLANNERY O'CONNOR CHARACTERS?)

The true unwritten history is where the answers lie and the unwritten history cannot -- by definition, he pointed out laboriously -- be composed -- but in a spirit of scholarship and sacrifice I would like to offer a few notes, leads as it were toward what it would contain and with what it would have to deal. Perhaps, by the end of the twenty-first when all of us now reading, writing and



propriating the category are all spitefully dead and with the evolution of multiplex stereophonic video-tape cassette recall ... the abolition of the written that is to say ... the true unwritten history might, at least be spoken or retrieved, might find a form that is to say. To the unborn and the penitent, hence, a few suggestions:

1) "Modern" science fiction, generally dated as having begun in late 1937 with the ascent of Campbell and going on through the rest of that and the next decade was a literature centered around a compact group of people; it was no Bloomsbury but there could have been no more than fifty core figures who did ninety percent of the writing and the editing. All of them knew one another, most of them knew one another well: lived together, married one another, collaborated, bought each other's material, married each other's wives and so on. For a field which was conceptually based upon expansion, the smashing of barriers, the far-reaching and so on science fiction was amazingly insular; one could almost speculate that this insularity and parochialism were the understandable attempts of frightened human beings faced with *terra incognita* to hold onto one another and to make their personal lives as limited and interconnected as possible. It could further be speculated that this parochialism shut off an entire alternative science fiction (Alexei Panshin has intimated this possibility but not this particular set of reasons): who is to know what writers and manuscripts not in any way connected with the Central Fifty languished in slush piles or in stamped, self-addressed return envelopes? Science fiction was being cooked up in offices and parties and bedrooms and club meetings; people would stream from Central to write it up and send it back in (and then write up next month's issue taking up the stuff already laid down in print) but the field was based on personal access and very few writers and stories were getting into the magazines without personal acquaintance with other writers and with the editors. The first thing that Damon Knight did in the forties as a science fiction writer manque was to accept Fred Pohl's invitation to come out from Oregon to Brooklyn and live with the Futurian Club; the young Asimov was introduced to present contributors by Campbell before Asimov had sold a word; Malcolm Jameson, pensioned off by the Navy for medical reasons, began to write science fiction (and became, briefly, an ASTOUNDING regular in the mid-forties) at the urgings of his old friend and fellow Navy officer Robert A. Heinlein.

2) One of the clear symptoms of editorial decline (this ties, in a way, to the point above but only by suggestion; hear me out) is the increasing proportion of material in a magazine or book line written by a decreasing number of contributors; venery, laziness, exhaustion or friendship seem to make almost any long-term editorship vulnerable to this condition. (I am not saying that science fiction in this case is any different than any other genre.) The ASTOUNDING of the late nineteen fifties had narrowed to four or five regular contributors in between whom a few asterisks squeezed the short stories: Silverberg, Anvil, Garrett, Janifer/Harris and Reynolds must have accounted for seventy percent of the magazine's contents in the period 1958-62. Over at GALAXY Fred Pohl, Robert Shekley and Phillip M. Klass must have contributed more than half the contents in the last three years of Horace Gold's editorship (1957-1960). This is not to dispute that this core group might have overtaken the magazines simply because they were the best, at least in terms of meeting the editorial vision (and there is no disputing that the GALAXY group at least includes three of the best ten writers of science fiction to date) but the consequences of such narrowing are obvious: the medium becomes insular and ambitious potential contributors become discouraged. There is, needless to say, a fine line an editor must tread between bringing around himself the best writers he can and giving them encouragement and buying from friends and familiars but the line is visible and the demarcation clear: Campbell in the early forties was on one side of it and in the late fifties was on the other and the quality of the work and its persistence today (very little of the late fifties ASTOUNDING is reprinted more than once if even that) constitutes a kind of judgment.

3) The clearest signal of John W. Campbell's loosened grip and influence on the field from 1960 (the time at which his obsessive pursuit of pseudo-scientific chicanery such as the Dean Drive began to become his editorial obsession rather than vice) is to compile a list of those writers who arose to prominence in that decade who never published in ANALOG and once for my amusement a long time ago (while JWC was still alive, for I wanted him to see it) I did so and published it. Here is a partial list of science fiction writers who did not appear in ANALOG from the issue of T/60 until the last issue assembled by JWC, 12/71:

J.G. Ballard, Brian W. Aldiss, Ursula K. LeGuin, Samuel R. Delaney, Joanna Russ, Larry Niven, Michael Moorcock, R.A. Lafferty, George Effinger, Terry Carr, Gardner Dozois, A.J. Budrys, Langdon Jones, Harlan Ellison, Kate Wilhelm, James Sallis, George Zebrowski, Norman Kagan, Theodore Sturgeon, Pamela Sargent, Philip K. Dick, Robert Shekley, Roger Zelazny.

Robert Silverberg is disqualified from this list: his last story, "The Callibrated Alligator" was in the 2/60 issue. (He obviously, though, did not sell Campbell in the sixties.) James Tiptree's first story and one other appeared in ANALOG. Niven's first ANALOG piece was published in 1972; it was apparently the last story that JWC ever bought.

And yet, for all of this, when I heard of JWC's sudden death on





7/11/71 and called Larry Janifer (who had not known) I trembled at Janifer's first remarks and felt that they were so: "The field has lost its conscience, its center, the man for whom we were all writing. Now there's no one to get mad at us any more."

1980: New Jersey

## ANONYMITY & EMPIRE

For the culture at large, the forties science fiction writers at the time were indivisible. There is no more graceful way to put this. There were for the first half of the decade no books at all, no anthologies, no reprints, no second serial rights. Novels and stories were written for the magazines, were published and went out of print, presumably forever. Asimov has written that everything about his career post-1946 came as a surprise; he had no idea at the time he was writing *FOUNDATION* or the robot series or anything else that these stories would live beyond the issues of the magazines in which they appeared. This did not bother him in the least; what other purpose did science fiction have except to live briefly and go away forever in the magazines with funny titles? There was sufficient reward in becoming a part of the ongoing literature in a form which had gripped you in childhood. The Queens Science Fiction League may not have been the world but for the young Asimov its approval and awe were all that he could have asked.

It must be understood that in this respect science fiction was no different for its writers than the other branches of popular literature which were appearing in the torrent of pulp magazines which, in the hundreds subsisted in various degrees of health until wartime paper shortages and finally television destroyed them at the end of the decade. Western and romance writers, adventure and sports pulpsters also worked for a half a cent to two cents a word and knew that when the magazines went off-sale their work would never be seen by a non-relative or -lover again. (Mystery writers did have a small book market but in the pre-NMA days only a vanishingly small percentage of magazine work could in expanded form find a book market and advances, averaging around \$250 even for first-rank writers like Woolrich were an insignificant part of their income.) The difference between science fiction writers and those of the other pulp genres, however, was that science fiction writers took their work seriously, put far more into it

psychically and were writing (because of the dominant presence of John W. Campbell in the market) to a consistently higher standard, an imposed rigor and a specialized background. It was impossible then as now to write science fiction without the most intimate reading knowledge of the form simply because the field was advancing so quickly in its language and devices that each story either made a direct contribution to the ongoing literature or risked rejection on the basis that it did not.

Pace Pronzini, my collaborator, with whom I have had arguments on this subject (and have found most of the time that he was in the right), Western, romance, sports, certainly mystery writers might have been no less serious about their work, no less dedicated or professional than science fiction writers. They certainly were not their inferiors technically, and the anonymity in which they worked must have had effects upon them no less profound than it did on the science fiction writers.

But the science fiction writers were specialists. If they did not have a thorough working knowledge of the literature and the cutting edge they simply did not survive. By 1940, only a very few of the science fiction writers who had been in *ASTOUNDING* when Campbell became editor were still publishing in the magazine, the others had been thrown out and their names -- Schachner, Schoepflin, Cummings -- were legion. They had been evicted not through malice on Campbell's part but because they were either unable or unwilling to meet his editorial demands and Campbell did much better by bringing to the magazine writers who had no sales background or alternate markets at all so that he could work with them from the outset ... and because they would not have developed alternate markets where they could have made as much money for far less effort. (Most of the thirties generation science fiction writers were pulp generalists who wrote through the entire range of fiction magazines and for whom science fiction was only a small percentage of their work. Schachner and Arthur Lee Zagat for two were enormously prolific and successful pulp writers; science fiction was only 10% of their output and after their eviction from the premises less than that ... but they are remembered now only for their science fiction.) Del Rey in his time did a fair amount of work for the confessions and sports magazines but others of the first Campbell generation -- Heinlein, Asimov, Sturgeon, Van Vogt -- wrote very little other than science fiction. (The Kuttners under their own names and a

plethora of pseudonyms wrote a great deal of fantasy but did not appear, as far as can be determined today, to any extent in the other category magazines.)

The rigor of the medium, the demands of the market and the anonymity in which the work was done must have had their effect upon these writers. Asimov's position is on the record but one can only speculate what science fiction did to the Kuttners who were turning in work like "Vintage Season", "Mimsy Were the Borogroves", "Shock", "When the Bough Breaks" for a cent-and-a-half a word, what science fiction did to Van Vogt who was writing over a hundred thousand words of science fiction a year working sixteen hours a day in a small apartment (and filling in the empty spaces with confession stories), what science fiction meant to Heinlein who wrote *SIXTH COLUMN* for \$900, *BY HIS BOOTSTRAPS* and *UNIVERSE* for about \$300 apiece, all of these writers putting up with their work without an inkling that it would ever appear again or would be read by other than the 50,000 -- 10,000 readers, mostly young, who composed the central audience for the science fiction magazines.

In a sense this anonymity may have been liberating -- one of the benefits of writing without sense of posterity or audience may be a great and abounding sense of freedom, the conviction that since what one is doing really does not matter one can, accordingly, do anything one wants -- and the texts and commentaries of the time indicate that to a certain degree all of the writers felt this way. It was a new kind of fiction being written in a different fashion; the knowledge that it was breakthrough literature of a sort might have been comforting to writers who could rationalize that what they did was too ambitious, too good for a mass audience. Nonetheless, the record makes clear that almost all of the forties generation of science fiction writers were finished at the end of the decade and looking for other things to do. Heinlein had turned (after a few sales to *COLLIER'S* and *THE SATURDAY EVENING POST*, the first science fiction post-1926 that had ever appeared in the national magazines) to the juvenile book market and was writing on contract for Scribner's with only a few "adult" novels -- *THE PUPPET MASTERS*, *DOUBLE STAR*, *THE STAR LUMINOX*, *THE DOOR INTO SUMMER* -- serialized in the magazines. L. Ron Hubbard with A.E. Van Vogt and Katherine MacLean had disappeared into the Dianetics Institute from which the latter two emerged to write again only a decade and a half later. Asimov had taken a doctorate in biochemistry and in

1949 after a few months of excruciating ambivalence, had taken a full-time teaching position at Boston University (the controlling aspect of his decision had been that he had never made nor had any reason to believe that he ever could make a living from science fiction).

The Kuttners had returned to school at the University of Southern California, seeking undergraduate degrees in psychology and going on to graduate study; Henry Kuttner did a series of mysteries for Harper & Row and a few fantasy novels but his name, with the exception of a single story (finishing off the series that became *MITANT*) never appeared in *ASTOUNDING* after 1950 and only once in *GALAXY*. Del Rey and Sturgeon stayed in the hunt but oddly changing their markets to do so; Sturgeon published only one story in *ASTOUNDING* in the nineteen-fifties and del Rey a bare scattering. \*\* The creation and expansion of the book market for science fiction, the restoration to print (and in certain cases highly remunerative print) of the work written in anonymity must have been highly gratifying to these writers but it appeared to inspire none of them to return to the steady production of science fiction. An entire new generation -- one could say several generations -- of science fiction writers were needed to pursue the vastly expanding category in the fifties and, of course, they presented themselves; among them were the finest writers who had ever worked in the form and collectively they gave science fiction its best decade.

But the first Campbell generation did not play a significant role in the science fiction of the fifties. Nor did Campbell; he was the only one who stayed behind, doing exactly as he had been doing but science fiction had been taken from him and as the decade progressed surely he knew it and his magazine began to show his increasing bewilderment and recrimination. The price the forties had imposed had been exacted, the battle had, long after the fact, been won ... but only after the writers had ceased to fight it and this late outcome from early and lonely struggle, this must have been the true bitterness of the decade for the writers long after the decade, unable to reproduce their best work. Anonymity is, at least, an openness of promise; outcome, whatever it may be, is a weight upon the heart.

1980: New Jersey

\*\*Sprague de Camp turned to non-fiction, juveniles and a scattering of fantasy and was no factor in fifties science fiction.

## GIVE ME THAT OLD-TIME RELIGION

Science fiction does not -- perhaps it cannot -- depict the future. What it does, as A.J. Budrys pointed out a long time ago, is to offer sentimentalized versions of the past or brutalized ones of the present transmuted into a template of the familiar. The future cannot by definition be portrayed; it will need a terminology and ethos which do not exist. Perhaps true science fiction, an accurate foreshadowing of the future, if such a thing were at all possible, would be incomprehensible. It is important to point out however, that as futurologists not only our devices but our credentials are miserable.

It is true -- as a notorious example -- that as late as 1967, no science fiction writer had understood that the Moon Landing, when it occurred, would be tied into the media and that it would be seen by several hundred million people. None of us saw it. The closest any of us came was Richard Wilson in a short-short story, "Harry Protagonist Brain-Drainer" in a 1967 issue of *GALAXY* which speculated that the first landing on Mars, witnessed by most of the population of this planet on the *Intermedia*, would expose the astronauts to the hypnotic and mind-destroying powers of the Secret Martians who would turn the minds of most of us to jelly. This is not bad thinking for 1500 words and was handled with Wilson's customary lucidity and élan but it had very little to do with the conditions that NASA and the networks were jointly evolving and the question of mass audience was strictly for the subplot, a means of setting up the one satiric point. Wilson wins the *NASA/CBS I Saw It Coming Award* but only by default and since the award pays only in honor (of which *NASA* and *CBS* have offered science fiction almost none) Wilson will have to be content with his otherwise decent career and 1969 Nebula Award for *MOTHER TO THE WORLD*.

For the rest of us -- Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke, Anderson and the sixties visionaries too, the movers and shakers who were attempting to write Street Science Fiction -- no honor whatsoever and no excuse. That a genre built upon visionary format whose claim to public attention through the early decades had been based upon its precognitive value should have utterly failed to glimpse the second or third most significant social event of the decade is -- one

puts on one's tattered prophet's robes -- quite disgraceful.

No excuse to blame the readership. The readership is not interested, really, in the visionary, the dangerous, the threatening or the difficult, that is true, but their expectations have been formed almost completely by what has been given them. Great writers make great audiences; it did not have to be this way. The simple and solemn truth, however, is that as *NASA* and the networks conspired to reduce the most awesome events of the twentieth century to interstitial pap between advertisements, most of us were in the boondocks, slaving away on our portions and outlines and our gimmick short stories, trying to figure out what new variation of Eric Frank Russell we could sneak by Campbell, what turn on a 1947 plot by Van Vogt out of a 1956 sketch by Dick might work this one last time for three-cents-a-word markets. While we slogged on in the Sixties recycling the recyclable for one thousand dollars in front money the liars and technicians were working ably to convert the holy into to garbage and a damned good job they (and we) made of it too. The liars and the technicians put the space program out of business by the mid-seventies. Perhaps it might all have been different if we had stayed on the job ... but then again all of us know that science fiction has almost nothing to do with the future so why feel guilty about it? I don't. And "Harry Protagonist Brain-Driver" is still around somewhere if anyone wants proof that we weren't entirely copped out.

No, ma'am, as the bishop said to the widow, I don't feel guilty at all. I just followed the scent.

1980: New Jersey

ESSAYS FROM ENGINES OF THE NIGHT  
WILL CONTINUE NEXT ISSUE.



# AND THEN I READ....



## BY THE EDITOR

### STARSHIP WOMEN

By Victor Koman  
Hustler 10-190, \$2.95  
Order from: Spectrum, Dept. E,  
POB 5184  
Willowick, OH 44094

This novel was originally titled SAUCER SLUTS by the author [a sf fan-writer/publisher] who was told by Sam Konkin III that the ms. would sell with that title no matter what was on the pages. I guess it did.

It was written in 1976.

It is terrible erotica and bad science fiction.

The story is about two young men on Earth who are kidnapped by four lovely, green-skinned young women aboard a saucer.

The women are desperate searchers for humanoid males who can father a new generation of their species; the green men have died off (and had too-small cocks anyway!).

The women are wowed by Bill and Jim's whangers and sex begins immediately. And so on as the saucer pulses its way to the women's home planet.

Alas, the men cannot fertilize the women, and Jim goes crazy when he realizes that the time warp factor means if they ever return to Earth hundreds of years will have passed here...and he kills himself and one of the women.

Bill is more resilient and stays the course, helps overthrow an anti-science dictatorship that has taken over on the planet Nivn (!), becomes a porn star there....

Koman likes alliteration and prose poetry:

"Mmm," she said, never missing a beat in her job on my meat."

'Ngio laughed and kissed the crown on the top of which rested a tiny diamond of horny-honey.'

And so on. All the crude words for sex and genitalia are used. All the sex is willing, wild, perfect, and uncomplicated (except for positioning) and a lot of it is patently so exaggerated and gross as to be impossible.

This type of sex writing I find anti-erotic, and I wonder why sex editors buy it? Is the key indredient copious cunt juice, gobbled jism and fuck holes? Is the small readership of sex novels turned on not by well-written erotic imagery, but by crude trigger words and gross action? I'd rather not believe that.

But the two Hustler books I've read, and a few Heatherpool Press novels I've seen recently indicate that is the case.

This is no attack on Victor Koman; he's a beginning pro and he hit the right market at the right time. But his novel is terrible by any measure.

### DIRECT DESCENT

By Frank Herbert  
Ace 14897-2, \$6.95

If you want to read 20 1954-ish short stories by Frank Herbert about a future in which Earth has through the eons become an Archives for the galaxy, and is once-in-a-while threatened by idiot galaxy governments...

These "pack rat" stories are from ASTOUNDING and have had, I suppose, a modicum of editing and rewriting by Herbert...enough for the editors to mislead the potential buyer with the cover proclamation: "The Newest Work By FRANK HERBERT. Author of DUNE."

The format is the trade paperback: hardback size pages, book paper, a stiff heavy stock cover, and a rip-off \$6.95 price.

You get about 25,000 words and 61 full-page and occasional double-page ink drawings by Garcia. Garcia is a good commercial artist and some of his drawings are effective. Most are space-wasters to fill out the necessary page count for the book.

Unless you're a completist, this "novel" of two barely related stories (separated by thousands of years) is a gyp. This is definitely not new Herbert fiction.

### WHITE LIGHT

By Rudy Rucker  
Ace 88564-0, \$2.25

Virgin Books, UK, £1.95

Once again deception by the Ace packaging decision-makers. The blurb at the top of the page reads: "First, LIFE AFTER DEATH, then ILLUSIONS, and now..."

On the back we read: "DO YOU WANT TO SEE GOD? There is mounting evidence that life, true life, begins after death. Researchers into the phenomenon of Life-After-Death have found incredible similarities in the reports of thousands of persons who were pronounced clinically dead and then revived. Virtually all reports have these elements in common: Departure from the physical body; a loud, humming noise; passage through a long, dark tunnel; a white light waiting at the end."

That would lead most anyone to expect a "non-fiction" book about life-after-death...if the credit, "A Novel By RUDY RUCKER" was not noticed.

This kind of misdirection and slanting of the covers (It has a non-fiction type cover/title make-up.) isn't blatant. And the novel is about one man's incredible experiences while in an out-of-body state. But it smacks of manipulation a bit beyond the call of normal profits.

The story is about a Felix Rayman, a man with problems, who is a mathematician [as is the author] and who finds he can spring his soul free of his body.

In this state of existence one time he meets a ghost, a soul-eater, and embarks upon a wild, mind-boggling journey across the universe to a planet of mathematical extremes called Cimón where all souls come for evaluation and placement after their Earth body dies.

Rucker has worked out a math/physics structure for the afterlife, and infinity is explored up one side and down the other.

As I say: wild, wonderful, inventive and spectacular. It's math sf, and it's fascinating, if at times a bit boring as Rucker explains the math and physics beyond my interest level.

The incredibilities are so fast and furious and far-out that disbelief grows apace. And in the end it appears that the whole experience may have been a drug/alcohol trip in Felix's brain.

This will not appeal to the occult/supernatural/religious readers who may buy the book expecting something else.

The Virgin Books paperback, in thin trade paperback size, has a simple, effective infinity symbol in white light on a textured, darker background. Very appropriate cover, effective. Though the type used for the text inside is about 9-10 point size; too small for comfortable reading, I think. But I have old eyes, and tired.

## WHO KILLED UTOPIA

By Paul Walker

Carlyle Books CS7062-T, \$1.95  
[Available from Burt Libe, POB 1196,  
Los Altos, CA 94022. Send \$2.50.]

Mr. Libe bought a large stock of Paul's book from Carlyle, feeling the publisher is not interested in promoting or seeking much distribution for the novel.

Carlyle to my knowledge has been publishing straight sex novels for...at least fifteen years. I was surprised to learn that they at least occasionally publish a non-sex novel. Their print-runs are low and their distribution isn't appropriate for non-sex novels. By accepting and publishing this novel they probably haven't done much for Paul's writing career. [Or his pocketbook, or theirs.]

WHO KILLED UTOPIA has some intriguing and captivating elements: the scenes involving "rogue" robots as they attempt to murder people are tensioned and gripping. The Poet---a giant computer whose heart is a human brain (going mad at last?) is handled well. And the technique and technology required to insure Earth society remains violence-free is foreboding.

The novel is a future mystery novel: the hero, Brazh, must discover who is programming the robots to kill, and why. Earth's civilization is at stake. And, at the end, his own life is at risk.

Yet the novel is flawed by a subtle lack of skill--of control---of the material. I had trouble being sure who was speaking several times, and couldn't keep several of the main characters clear in my mind.

And the last line.... The editor should mercifully have blue-penciled it. Brazh has gone too long without sleep, is emotionally and physically exhausted. He meets his wife outside the Council Tower, and after rejecting breakfast and sleep, says, "Let's fuck."

It was a slap in the face and completely inappropriate.

## THE TRAVAILS OF JANE SAINT

By Josephine Saxton

Virgin Books, £1.95

My problem is that I sometimes don't review a book while it's fresh in my mind. And---like Chinese food---some books just...disappear from the mental stomach without a trace.

A fantastic dream novel written by a feminist.

The opening pages tell us Jane is a revolutionary and has been

sentenced to 'total reprogramming' in a state hospital/prison by means of a sensory deprivation tank.

Her dream is the battle for her mind in her subconscious as she struggles to retain Self and Values. The dreamscape is varied, peopled with wizards, monsters and men. She is fighting, also, to keep her three children.

At times the dreamscape becomes a nightmare.

I found the novel fairly interesting, but too private.

Virgin packaged it to look like the worst kind of blatant pornography.

## THE DESCENDANTS OF STAR

By Thomas C. Bailey

Exposition Press \$5.50

325 Kings Highway

Smithtown, NY 11787

Bailey has the right writer instincts---his Prologue has good ideas as it sets up a narrative of the ancient past...from 5100 A.D.

But the first two paragraphs of chapter one reveal him as an amateur in the worst sense. Terrible sentences, malaprop phrases and words....

The first paragraph:

"The land was as green as a carpet on the floor of any house. It was a beautiful vista, mountains green and serene, clouds drifting over them like dreams. In the middle of this green vista there were buildings. These buildings looked like those in a futuristic university, which it was. The buildings were streamlined, yet they were imposing. Instead of steel, they were made of beige brick---handmade. There were windows and

stairs going from one floor to another. The stairs were white. There were also rails, so people walking on the upper levels of the buildings wouldn't fall. The whole place looked like an overgrown school. There were people in this university, but these people were different. They were of all types ---some were baldheaded, some people had green hair, some walked around in cat-burglar-type costumes with red goggles.'

The point is, Bailey doesn't know his writing is a disaster. He cannot "see" the mistakes. He cannot correct the mistakes.

And the editors---if that is the correct term for those who handle ms. in a vanity press house---are not about to violate his prose; it would insult him and would be too damn much work.

The second paragraph is one-page long, and an equal disaster.

Many are called to the art and craft of fiction, but few are good enough.

And if you perhaps cannot see the errors and horrors in the above quoted paragraph, do not try to write for a living: you'll starve to death.

## DREAM MAKERS

By Charles Platt

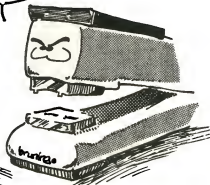
Berkley, \$2.75

Subtitled "The Uncommon People Who Write Science Fiction", these 28 profiles of the famous and well-known are extremely well done.

Not interviews...not simply Q and A's. These are more fully fleshed encounters that give Charles' informed personal impressions and judgements as well as the writer's responses to some usual and

I don't care what you say  
about Freedom of Speech...

I WILL  
NOT STAPLE  
PORNOGRAPHY!



unusual interview questions.

We see the writer at home, oftentimes with his guard down, playful, sometimes savage....always revealing of self.

Readers of SFR have been privileged to read two of these profiles ---the Ellison and the Dick---and know the quality and flavor of these profiles.

In some instances it must have taken a bit of courage to okay an interview with Charles Platt, and in an Appendix several authors take exception to a few of Platt's observations and interpretations.

These profiles/interviews are endlessly interesting, even exciting. And this book is a Must Read for any sf fan or hardcore reader. Certainly it is necessary for any self-respecting library.

One quibble: Charles claims he could only manage to interview one woman (Kate Wilhelm, and that by mail with Damon Knight) because most women sf writers aren't all that well known, and most write fantasy anyway.

Listen, if he can include Edward Bryant and Hank Stine, he can include C.J. Cheryh and Tanith Lee, to say naught of Andre Norton and M.Z. Bradley.

Those profiled/interviewed in this book are: Isaac Asimov, Thomas Disch, Robert Sheckley, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Hank Stine, Norman Spinrad, Frederik Pohl, Samuel R. Delany, Barry N. Malzberg, Edward Bryant, Alfred Bester, C.M. Kornbluth (indirectly), Algis Budrys, Philip Jose Farmer, A.E. van Vogt, Philip K. Dick, Marlan Ellison, Ray Bradbury, Frank Herbert, Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm, Michael Moorcock, J. G. Ballard, E.C. Tubb, Ian Watson, John Brunner, Gregory Benford, Robert Silverberg, and Brian Aldiss.

There is also a short bio on Charles Platt himself, self-writt-

and a new society begins to form, and contending social forces clash in attempts to control and direct mankind with this new 'wild talent'.

John has some fun examining how an army would control its soldiers, how it would fight a war....and how it would try to dominate various cults and freedom-lovers.

An interesting but incredible novel.

Excellent cover by...whoever (no credit line), and an attractive new cover format for Zebra.

#### PROSE BOWL

By Bill Pronzini & Barry N. Malzberg  
St. Martin's Press, \$9.95

The editors of St. Martin's decide to publish a strange book once in a while. I first noticed this tendency in their issuing Dave Lanford's AN ACCOUNT OF A MEETING WITH DENIZENS OF ANOTHER WORLD--1871.

Now, this delicious, truth-telling satire of pulp writing and writers. Hacks.

Imagine a future in which popular hack writers are treated like pro athletes---with individuals in leagues, semi-final write-offs, and finally---the Prose Bowl.

This novel is about Rex Sackett, the Metaphor Kid, as he pulp-proses his way to victory...but not before he is beset by villains, betrayal, self-deception...all the formula problems a hero must face.

But he sits at his desk in the Bowl with thousands of screaming fans in the stands, and he writes category fiction according to the luck of the draw. His opponent is an old pro---The Cranker.

Their contest is one of endurance and quality control: whoever reaches 10,000 words first--wins!

Thus:

#### THREE-RING PSYCHUS

By John Shirley  
Zebra. \$1.95

John likes to play fiction games with the collective unconscious. He believes (apparently) that a mass unconscious will exist, and that in extremis it can cause violent social/cultural/physical events.

In THREE-RING PSYCHUS the whole of humanity loses weight and floats upward into the sky... Soon there are great clotted strata of people thousands of feet above cities and country....

There are problems of survival. But soon people learn to control a new ability---levitation by will---

THE DENEBAIAN GREEN-BEAST CAME TOWARD HER, MOVING WITH A CURIOUSLY FLOWING MOTION, ITS TENTACLES SWAYING IN A SENSUAL DANCE OF ALIEN LUST. SHE STOOD FROZEN AGAINST A RUDDER OF ROCK AND STARED AT THE THING IN HORROR.

And---

SLEDGE STALKED ACROSS HIS PLUSH OFFICE, LEAVING FOOTPRINTS IN THE THICK SHAG CARPET LIKE ANGRY DOUGHNUTS. VELDA VANCE, ALLURING BEAUTIFUL SECRETARY TO SLEDGE AND CHANDLER INVESTIGATIONS, LOOKED UP IN ALARM. "SOMEBODY MURDERED MILES CHANDLER LAST NIGHT," SLEDGE GRITTED TO HER, "AND STOLE THE MICAMBER DIAMOND HE WAS GUARDING."

Some of these stories are [I admit] readable and captivating as they pour from the contending hacks.

And this overall satire of sports, writing, society...life... is a giver of wisdom in its fashion. But the reader is left with the uneasy suspicion that the wisdom, too, may be trite...hackwork.

WHERE DOES THIS MOCKERY STOP?

#### AN ENEMY OF THE STATE

By F. Paul Wilson  
Doubleday, \$10.00

A novel of the LaNague Federation. A Libertarian novel that preaches basic economic truths that statist hate to hear, especially about inflation...or rather the calculated debasement of currency.

This novel, though ostensibly about a future, independent cluster of Earth colonies who are in economic bondage to Earth as one-crop suppliers of food, is actually rooted in the present-day economic crisis of America.

Wilson systematically shows the reader how and why the government devalues the currency, shows the no-win trap it sinks into, and shows/tells the average citizen how to oppose and frustrate the government tactics.

The story is about Peter LaNague's plan to overthrow the USA-style Outworld Imperium and put in place a Libertarian, free-market economy and minimal government.

In doing this his clever tactics and strategy are very effective. His near downfall and calculated risk of death are simply plot devices to make the novel readable and involving. They work, but they are transparent and obvious.

This is a "different" sf novel; readable, instructive, eye-opening, and a bit clumsy.





**T**uesday, May 6, 1980. Things move slowly with the novel. I decide this in the evening, as I read over the blue sheets which are the carbon copies of last weekend's work. My newest system for writing is to make one original on yellow paper, a carbon on blue and then do hand corrections on the blue. Once I've rethought those, and finally amended the yellow original sheets, I take the carbon to the university and file it in a stack in the big metal cabinet in my office. Ever since Dell lost two copies of the *FIND THE CHANGELING* ms. and Gordon Eklund's wife threw a snit and burned the others, leaving only a partial rough carbon to be discovered 6 months later after we'd all given up, I've been cautious.

**Wednesday, May 6.** I go by the labs I'm running and check how the teaching assistants are handling the Frank-Hertz experiment. The students appear to be doing better this quarter than last. There's trouble with some of the circuitry but we fool around with it, guided more by intuition than anything else, and the rig begins to operate successfully. Ever since I changed the PSE lab course to require each student to work alone, building the experiment and taking the data and analyzing it himself, there has been more interest from them; so the teaching assistants say.

I write a thank-you letter to Cliff Simak, for his kind note about *TIMESCAPE*. We'd had a good long talk at a convention a month ago, and discovered we have much the same feelings about some SF themes and both consider ourselves country folk at heart.

I was born in southern Alabama, across the bay from Mobile, and

spent most of my first decade living in small towns, on farms, always near the sea. I like rural surroundings and have managed to find a beach town, Laguna Beach, which combines some naturalness, proximity to a city (the greater southern California sprawl) and the chance to be near the ocean whenever I like, which is often. I consider myself a southern writer, with instincts developed there. My father fought in WW II and found the Army much to his liking, compared with teaching agriculture in small Alabama towns. We left Alabama in 1948, returning occasionally for long stays while my father trained or took assignments in distant places unsuitable for families.

He was on MacArthur's general staff in the Korean war and commanded an artillery battalion in Germany. We lived "on the economy" in Germany, but our three years in Japan were spent on a base. I saw a lot of Japan and liked it, though I've never been back. In Germany I became interested in SF fandom and started publishing a fanzine, *VOID*. We returned to Dallas, Texas in 1957, and I became caught up in science. My father retired after becoming Commandant of the US Army Artillery School in Oklahoma, and I got my Bachelor's degree at the University of Oklahoma in 1963, mostly because it was close to home. My father is similar to Eisenhower, a country type who is cleverer than many would at first suppose. I was acutely conscious myself of the prejudice against Southerners, and in adolescence trained myself into a straight American accent. (I later found that this seemed to make me more aware of accents and speech mannerisms, and to this day I tend to lapse into an approximation of whatever ac-

**BY GREGORY BENFORD**

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cent those around me are speaking. After moving to California for graduate work in 1963 I gradually slid into a Californian mode of speech. Get me excited about something, though, and the southern vowels will leap out.)

The day's second mail delivery arrives. There are reprints of a paper I did with my now-graduated student, Bob Buschauer. Bob now teaches at Cal State Polytech at Pomona, a solid school, and he seems to enjoy it greatly. Our paper concerns the luminosity of pulsars, trying to set theoretical limits. MONTHLY NOTICES OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY is a good journal to publish in: reasonably swift, attentive, neat and read by a larger range of people than ASTROPHYSICAL JOURNAL, or AP J, the American leading journal. Also, MONTHLY NOTICES doesn't have page charges. I've always felt rather like a vanity press writer when I pay charges, though of course in the sciences these things are looked upon differently.

Fall asleep reading Faulkner.

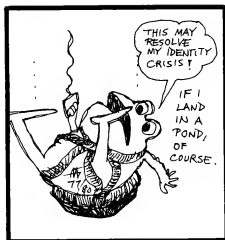
Thursday, May 8. This is the one day a week I definitely set aside to stay home and work. Usually I write; often fiction. Something nudges at me, a TV presentation of "The Music School" by Updike, seen last night, plus some research I've been doing on NGC 1097, and I go in to my study to make notes. I begin work on a short story, "Plates", feeling that I'll try out a few paragraphs for feel and then get down to the ever-looming novel. I start out by hand, as usual. Doesn't come easily. I have started without looking up my notes made when the basic idea occurred to me about seven years ago, but now I take out the notebook, tear out the pages and lay them beside my own recent scribbles.

Most of my original plot, involving a graduate student, I can't use. The basic idea, though -- discovery of an extragalactic phenomenon on which casts light on events at the center of our own galaxy -- will work. I try a few more paragraphs, rummaging for the proper voice. Must be first person, yes. A certain distance, an assessing gaze, but an open man, inquisitive. The atmosphere of Caltech, yes; and abruptly I see why I've started this story, this day -- tomorrow I'll visit Caltech and something will surely click into place. I put away my notes and write a memo about university stuff and then go after the novel. Meet Mark at his bus stop, walk down with him to his music lesson. He discusses seriously what he wants for his birthday. I swing by the library while he is in his lesson, glance at the PUBLISHER'S WEEKLYS (favorable

on the new Wolfe, ho-hum on the Spinrad, expect commercial success for the Silverberg), check a local bookstore for what's new (not much) and read a short story on the beach. Walk home with Mark and play catch. Watch NORMA RAE on the movie channel in the evening, drink a bottle of Chardonnay.

Friday, May 9. This is colloquium day in the physics department and I am one of the three colloquium chairmen this year. I arrive at my office to find a taped telephone series of increasingly anxious messages from a graduate student who works with our colloquium speaker. The speaker is sick and can't make it. I immediately confer with the other chairmen and we find a substitute among our own department members. Another crisis averted. I settle down and read the mail -- a few reprints of papers on plasma physics, a membership bill from the American Physical Society, a fanzine and a letter from a reader of IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT -- and then begin to think about a theoretical paper I have been writing on galactic jets. These are the huge gouts of relativistic electrons which are ejected from distant galaxies, which we see in the radio frequencies. What ejects them we don't know, and I have dealt only with the dynamics of the jets. I review my calculations and make a new note about ramifications. Then a quick lunch and I'm off driving for an hour to Caltech. There I walk around a bit to renew my impressions of the long tiled hallways and find Roger Blandford's office. We talk for an hour or so and then I look up Peter Goldreich. Peter and I have waged a battle against a French mathematical physicist over a particular relativistic radiation mechanism which may be relevant to pulsars and quasars. Goldreich proposed the mechanism years ago and I studied it, reproducing his results and adding some sophistication to the mathematics later. The Frenchman has attempted to show that an even more sophisticated calculation shows that the mechanism fails. We have tried to duplicate his calculation and, surprise! -- it turns out he is dead wrong: the mechanism remains, essentially as we proposed it. Goldreich and I are rather happy with this result, and we speculate on the motives of the Frenchman, whose handling of the whole affair has been rather rude.

I leave shortly after 5 pm and drive to a large home in Pasadena, where I am expected for dinner. I am to give a talk on writing SF and the market in the 1980s to an annual Pasadena Writers' meeting.



The Japanese dinner is relaxing and the hostess takes me to the auditorium where about 100 people are milling around. I make a few notes while I am being introduced (I haven't planned anything beforehand) and then launch into a discussion of SF as a market, what a newcomer can expect, how to roll with the editorial punches, etc. I make a few jokes about being a writer and the talk as a whole goes over well. The crowd seems to want the real insiders' gossip and how-to elements, rather than abstract lit'r'y discussion. I give it to them. After about an hour I ask for questions, and then sign a few books -- a ceremony that always seems a bit strange to me -- and then I'm off, free. A few drinks at the hostess's house and the long drive home. On the way I listen to a Vivaldi program and try to plot the next chunk in the novel.

Saturday, May 10. Letter from a Polish SF society, asking for bio and books. I make a few notes for novel purposes, reread notes from before and skim the latest PHYSICS TODAY, marking pieces of possible use for the Britannica summary I do at the end of the year. Then I chuck it all for the day and walk down to the center of Laguna with the family, looking in on the bookstores. Play with Alyson and Mark on the beach. In the afternoon Joan and I go to an open-air brunch, the annual meeting of the Laguna Beach Chamber Music Society. It is in the home of a rather rich man, the place dripping with 18th and 19th Century Italian art and furniture. Wonderful food. Joan is made president of the Society and there is discussion of the concerts for next season. (One of the advantages of our location is that we can walk down the hill to hear some of the best chamber groups in the world.) I eat rather more than I should, as usual, hitting slightly above my 3500+ calories/day rate.

That evening Rick and Asenath Sternbach come by to show us the four black and whites Rick has done for a story of mine to appear in *DESTINIES*. Fine stuff. Rick is a quiet, intense and an exceptional talent, probably the best to emerge in SF in over a decade.

**Sunday, May 11.** Mother's Day. Presents for Joan, brunch out. Work in the garden. Call my mother to chat. Practice softball with Mark. Work on "Plates".

**Monday, May 12.** A proofed version of an astrophysics paper of mine comes in from AP J for checking. Tedious work. I spend an hour with Keith Kato, my graduate student, discussing experiments he's doing. Keith is also an SF fan, and even attends conventions, subscribes to fanzines, etc. That he should wind up having a part-time SF writer as a major professor is one of those coincidences a writer would never dare use. He works well and is making good progress. We discuss two papers we've been preparing for the plasma physics journals. I don't want to send them to the journal yet, because something nags at me about the theoretical explanation. I ask Keith to recheck all the data and replot the points in a different way. Plasma seminar that afternoon.

Letters from John Douglas at Simon and Schuster, enclosing very favorable letters on *TIMESCAPE* from Anthony Burgess and Walter Miller, Jr. Wow. These are people I admire the hell out of, as we Southerners say, and their approval is gratifying.

**Tuesday, May 13.** I conduct my usual discussion section for the introductory physics course. The students seem bright. In the afternoon I finish reading the AP J proofs. This paper has two Italian co-authors; I really should get in touch with them about the changes I've made here and there in the light of recent new radio astronomy maps, but there isn't time, so I go ahead.

Keith Kato brings by the replotted data. Some of it doesn't square with the way we've thought about the theory.

Make some notes about "Plates" in the evening.

My back therapy seems to be doing some good. I sleep fairly comfortably for the first time in a week.

**Wednesday, May 14.** I attend the Honors Lunch for outstanding graduate and undergraduate students in the School of Physical Sciences, one from each department. Our graduates are getting better and better. One of them asks me if I have a new novel coming out soon and I manage to deflect conversation away to matters scientific fairly soon after answering the question. I realize I am getting fairly bored with describing the publishing biz to outsiders, especially since it's unbelievably irrational.

I figure out a new way to explain the Kato data. Work on that through the afternoon.

Call from Owen Davies at OMNI, asking if I'll write some Astronomy columns for them. I agree. Deadline for the first is tight: June 1.

**Thursday, May 15.** Work on the short story, think about the novel. When I run out of writing steam I do some more calculations regarding the Kato data. This explanation looks much better than our earlier ideas. Some uncertainties in the calculation, though, make it difficult to reliably predict the power we should observe. Luckily, the data lies within a reasonable parameter range for the theory. For this you pay the price that the observed power in the 1 cm wavelength range doesn't help confirm the theory very well. Theories that can be adjusted to agree with just about anything aren't useful; in fact, since you can't make a prediction with them, they aren't

even scientific in the strict sense. So we have to rely on the spectrum as a crucial test. Son of a gun, it seems to work out.

Goddam back is bothering me again.

**Friday, May 16.** Talk to Silverberg about stock market. I have a sense, developing strongly over the last year, that anyone who has family obligations must pay much attention to economics. The classical sound investments are drifting close to the rocks and even the small clump of capital the Benfords have needs guidance. Silverberg takes a very traditional investment policy, never sells anything, doesn't fool with real estate, etc. To me this is madness, particularly in his tax bracket, but on the other hand, he is a reliable source of information on the more traditional stocks.

Faculty meeting at 11, about two new assistant professor appointments. Both gain approval. I remember how, when I attended my first such meeting in 1971, I had expected solemn and profound deliberations. Instead, there is a comfortable air and jokes are made. But the business is serious and the decisions are gradually arrived at, sampling the bulk of the opinions, before any votes are taken. Both leading candidates for the positions gain approval. I'm glad of this; we can use a new plasma experimentalist, and this one looks good. I am running my own little experimental group, even though I'm a theorist, and I can use some help.

Letter from a fanzine editor, Dan Steffan, asking if I'll write a retrospective about the days when Ted White, Terry Carr and I edited a fanzine together, *VOID*. What the hell; I decide to do it. Should be fun. I often write just because I like writing itself, pushing out the words. The fact that sometimes this is a way of not working on fiction, which is tough going, I try to ignore.

**Saturday, May 17.** Softball game of Mark's; they lose.

New PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY has a great positive review of *TIMESCAPE*. This makes me feel definitely up the whole afternoon, until I remind myself that I can't let myself be tossed about by the winds of critical opinion. Burgess and Miller, sure, but not some faceless reviewer. It is easier to believe this than to practice it, though, as every author knows. Trouble is, I know that the SF audience as a whole is more interested in wish fulfillment fantasies than anything else, and that's not my vector. The question is whether I should seek a larger audience, maybe outside SF, which has my inter-

WE HYPNOTISE YOU TO  
SCALE SHEER WALLS.  
AS A SAFETY PRECAUTION, IF YOU  
DO FALL, WE HYPNOTISE YOU SO YOU  
CAN FLY.



ests. It is hard to ignore the flat fact that most of the SF crowd is a passing throng of adolescents and probably always will be. The act of faith you hear from such high priests of the biz as Dave Hartwell is that there remains a literate, sensitive, long-term audience for what Zebrowski always calls "high SF". I seriously doubt this proposition but I can't disprove it. Certainly the awards don't bear on the point; they're from a minute fraction of the readers. Oh, well. I'm pretty sure a lot of the SF crowd will dislike *TIMESCAPE*'s space devoted to characters and historical background. There is even a whole chapter about a doctoral exam; I know that won't play with a lot of them. I suspect the characters, middleclass types whose interests are cerebral, won't appeal to the large readership who apparently want something currently passing for hugely relevant, forward thinking insight: sensitive far-future folk atop their heroic horses.

Oh, well, I made all my choices about the book long ago; only now, at some remove, can I begin to see how it blends into the field. It's this way with every book. I always have my own later evaluation of my work, and by my lights the Graham Greene division into entertainments and novels is useful. In that sense only *IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT* and *TIMESCAPE* are my novels, with a possible reservation about *IF THE STARS ARE GODS*. The first two are my own favorites, so I don't know whether I'm identifying ambition with achievement or not. You never do, I guess. Such reflections are typical of the time a novel is about to come out, for me. There is I think, a steady conflict between commercial values and personal ones, all warring inside the same person. I write some things for the sheer joy of production, to be a craftsman, to be a pro. Nothing wrong with that. (Then why do I sometimes feel a curious, undefined conflict?)

I go home and reread the Tom Disch essay in the *Nichols SF AT LARGE* volume. I wonder at times why he's still in the field. Why is Gene Wolfe? I'll have to ask them sometime.

Sunday, May 18. Self doubt squashed or maybe satiated, write a major scene in the novel, a scene I've been planning for weeks and have balked from writing so far.

Faculty brunch at the chairman's home; excellent. Interesting results from the neutrino folk.

Monday, May 19. Meeting at lunch to finish off details of setting up, at long last, a student-operated bookstore on campus. I've been working for this for three years and now

a loan for \$250,000 from the Regents has come through, so it looks like sho' nuff success. And I'll be glad as hell to be quit of the job.

Tuesday, May 20. Work on some radio astronomy data. In the evening I write the astronomy piece for *OMNI*, taking as subject good ol' NCG 1097. There's a beautiful color print they can use.

Wednesday, May 21. Spend most of the day in the lab, peering at recalcitrant experiments. The quantity of sheer fiddling in experimental physics is numbing. That's why I decided to get out of it, after spending two years tracking down vacuum leaks and electrical faults in a nuclear spin resonance lab. It was a wise decision, for one of my nature. Now I'm back supervising exactly that sort of thing, but the pleasure is that I get to look at results, and can sidestep most of the grunt labor. Of course, there's dog work in theory, too. A lot.

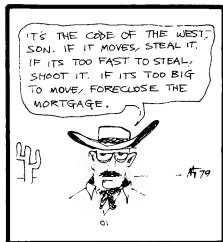
Thursday, May 23. In one long session I finish "Plates", about 6500 words. Decide to call it "Exposures".

Friday, May 23. Lunch with one of the two novelists in the U.C. Irvine writing school. His pen name is Macdonald Harris and he was nominated for the National Book Award (for *THE BALLOONIST*) some years back. He tells me horror stories about mainstream publishing. Tales of agents forgetting their clients, of neglect from well-thought-of houses, of incestuous ingroups. Sounds familiar. He lets drop that none of his books has ever earned out its hardback advance, despite several paperback sales. And his advances don't seem all that high, either. SF does have its pluses.

This exam for a doctoral student. He does reasonably well. Students have an odd notion -- I remember it from my student days -- that faculty love to cut them up on oral exams. In fact, a professor likes nothing better than to find a student who tells them something interesting in a clear way. It's far more delightful to be told something new than to merely sit in judgment.

I go for one more therapy session for my back, before my trip. It seems better. They're still allowing me only swimming as exercise. I have sustained enough injuries in the last three years to give one pause. Either I'm getting careless or the machine is giving out.

Letter from Malzberg. He is better, as usual, about the SF field. I wish he could overcome it and write some more, for he is a singular tal-



ent and it would be valuable to watch him develop.

More rewriting on "Exposures". Am I avoiding working on the novel? This is what it usually feels like if my subconscious is hanging back from doing something. Oh, well; no point in forcing matters.

Saturday, May 24. Picnic on the beach with friends. Read a few scientific journals. More on "Exposures".

Sunday, May 25. More beach, more notes on the novel. I've got thick notebooks of them now, so detailed I wonder how I can mine it efficiently for material.

In early afternoon I get tired of pushing ideas around and resolve to quit, go for a walk, and then a notion comes into my head, a theme for a short story. I mull it over for two or three minutes and then, acting on impulse and no small amount of frustration with the novel, I find myself rolling clean paper in to the typewriter and beginning without pause, writing the thing as fast as I can go. Malzberg often writes afterwards to his stories saying "written in 37 minutes on February 4, 1972" or the like, and I've always puzzled over how that could be, but now I find myself making it all up as my fingers move, and in 61 minutes -- damn, I was trying for a perfect hour -- I finish "Slices", the first story I've written in quite a while without any planning. In the mid-1970s I wrote by dictation and knocked out some of my best stories ("White Creatures", "Doing Lennon") in a Sunday morning, going hell for leather. It has its rewards. "Slices" is a commercially viable story, I suppose, but its value to me is mostly in the steam I blew off by writing it.

See David and Marilee Samuelson in the evening; swimming and SF talk. He tells some funny stories about his class in essay writing.

TIME FOR A BLOW AGAINST THE  
EMPIRE... THE NEXT DOUBLE PARKED  
CAR I SEE... I STOP ALONGSIDE OF AND  
PUT UP MY HOOD!



He speaks well of the new Gary Wolfe critical volume.

Monday, May 26, Memorial Day. As Laguna fills with tourists I flee, taking a two-step flight to Albuquerque. My government car isn't there to meet me, so I grab an Avis and drive north, stopping at Indian sites for the lovely view near the Rio Grande. This is a marvelous crystalline land, sharp and immediate even in the gathering dusty heat of early summer. I went this way often some years ago, when I was working with people at Los Alamos -- which is visible on the distant etched plateau, still V'd with gullies of snow. I liked Santa Fe then and coming into it now, as arranged, I turn off and find George RR Martin's house. Lisa Tuttle is there, too. We talk, gossip, go to dinner. I tell them about a famous SF writer who maintains he must screw every day, and the difficulties of rearrangement this gets him into. Railroad's office is a shrine to SF; I reflect on the fact that mine is a hodgepodge of books, never quite put in order. I like orderly offices but only occasionally get mine into shape. I wonder if anybody has ever tried classifying writers on a scale of neatness.

Tuesday, May 27. Wake up staring at Railroad's hardback collection. He makes breakfast and Lisa tells about life in Texas. I went to high school in Dallas and the details sound as though they haven't changed much. I am impressed with the level of economic difficulty she is willing to put up with to write. I wonder if I would do the same, all for the muse. No, I think, on the drive back to Albuquerque, I wouldn't. I made that decision, without really thinking it through clearly, back in Dallas. My sourly cynical fanzine writings of that time -- which I've been reviewing lately for the I-remember-VOID piece -- bring back to me my headheaded self of the late 50s and early 60s. My parents had persuaded me that life was tough, life was earn

est and I made the immediate deduction that joining the Sputnik sendup was a smart bet. And it was more fun than the notion of pounding a typewriter, too; life itself, whole, can easily beat a garret. I don't regret the decision.

Turn in the Avis, pick up the GSA car, drive south along the Rio Grande to Socorro. It's a windswept little town with a small technical college in it. I pass through and at 70 mph wind through 55 miles of steadily ascending mountain country. The specks of white ahead resolve into radio disks, all mutely peering at a spot in the sky, laid out in a Y-shaped pattern, each arm at least 14 kilometers long. The Very Large Array is the biggest radio interferometer ever built, placed 7000 feet up on the floor of an ancient lake bed. The altitude gets above most of the interfering water vapor in the atmosphere and also isolates the site from commercial interference. (You can pick up a TV show from a thousand miles away, though, if you want.)

I drive across the site and go into the big main building, where Jack Burns greets me. He takes me on a walking tour of the facility. It's nearly finished, due to open, with a senator cutting the tape, October, 1980. As we approach the radio dishes loom up and up until, as we climb on the catwalk, I realize they are each as big as a two-storey house. The wind shrieks through the heavy mounts, at least thirty miles an hour. The control room is moving them into position to lock on vertical, because they can be unstable in winds like these. Vertical minimizes the cross section, but of course it shuts down the VLA too. Climbing into the bowl of a stationary, moored disk, I manage to twist my back some, but I forget about it in the surprising heat of the sun-catching bowl. Here there

is no wind. We talk for a while and then climb back down.

I spend the evening looking at fresh radio maps of extragalactic sources with extended jets -- radio sorcery, indeed -- and talking to the team which works on such matters. We eat out in a "nearby" (15 miles) town; okay Mexican food. I stay up to midnight, watching data come through that I'm interested in. It is displayed on a TV screen which can provide a number of different color contrasts. It is eerie to see a radio galaxy in blue and green, with red background.

Before falling asleep in the motel-like on-site room they've given me, I read the John Varley story in NEW VOICES III that Railroad has given me. Pretty good.

Wednesday, May 28. Up early, breakfast at the cafeteria. The VLA is a national lab run by the Associated Universities, and thus is free of the officialdom air of other labs -- notably, it's nothing like the Ernest Lawrence Livermore Lab, where I did fusion plasma research for four years before joining the UCI Physics department. I spend the morning discussing results with the observers. It turns out my suggestion of mapping NGC 1097 in the radio was done only weeks before. Surprisingly, there is absolutely no sign of the jets which appear in the optical. This casts into grave doubt the model of ejected black holes; the jets were supposed to be their wakes. Well, I say, maybe some things are ejected from the center of NGC 1097 but it's mild stuff, perhaps a clumping of gravitationally bound stars. The idea doesn't seem very promising, but there must be some explanation and the absence of a radio trace merely deepens the mystery.

After lunch I give the first of two talks on the theory I've been working on over the last year: stability of relativistic jets. It is well attended and seems to go over well. That evening we eat at a steak restaurant which uses local beef and for the first time in my life I cannot finish the steak; it must be 2 1/2 pounds, easy.

I stay up late, watching maps come in from the computer processing. In one of the sources a small, jet-like spike appears. Interesting.

Before falling asleep I spend some time relaxing by trying to rederive a mathematical result I got some months ago. It's fun and calms the mind. The trouble with doing it at the end of the day is that my metabolism is variable, and I lose my mental keenness at night. I find I can't reproduce the result. The hell with it.

I do exercises for my back and go to sleep.

Thursday, May 29. I awaken early and can't get back to sleep, so try the problem of the night before. This time it comes easily. I also write down some notes on the novel which occurred to me as I was waking up; this nudging of the subconscious has become a standard work habit with me in these crowded days.

Same routine as yesterday. When the VIA people called me up and invited me out I had no idea it was so isolated. You could get fidgety out here; most people take the bus to Socorro, 55 miles, but it's no metropolis. I think of myself as a country boy, but this isn't country, it's a giant pool table framed by mountains.

In early afternoon I review my seminar and, finishing early, I call up Dave Hartwell in New York. I sit watching the dishes tilt and talk about the advertising budget for TIMESCAPE. Turns out there isn't any. Also, a maneuver Norman Spinrad and I worked out, whereby the paperback came out early to capitalize on the hardback reviews, has been okayed for Norman but not for me. \*Sigh.\* More strange bookbiz.

There are some damn good comments after my seminar. I make some notes to use in later research. This is the kind of science which can't be carried out by reading the journals. It makes up the bulk of how science is really done, and I've reflected often on how little the historian of science gets to glimpse this. (I won't even mention how little of it is in SF ...) In the old days, to be sure, a scientist wrote letters to his peers, and they saved them. The correspondence was human and often garrulous. Now when a scientist gets an idea, he writes a letter and publishes it formally in a letter journal. A lot of the zest is lost.

Another Mexican restaurant to-night; excellent. After returning to the control room of the VIA, and waiting for new results on the screens, I punch into the FTS line and call Spinrad in NYC. He has a good overall vision of what's happening at Simon & Schuster, though the news still isn't pleasant. I call Charlie Brown, too, to see if he has any roundabout dope. He has, and altogether I begin to feel better about the advertising dustup. My agent has written a letter in protest to the S&S publisher, getting Dave into a bit of hot water, but the underlying fact is that S&S is treating the whole SF line with monumental indifference, and the larger audience I and others had hoped to reach isn't going to be easily found.

Stay up late, talking and peering at the screens.

Friday, May 30. Up early, into my GSA car, stop in Socorro for breakfast, then on to Albuquerque. Call Suzy Charnas from the airport and chat about good ol' S&S and feminism in SF. My flight is late, I miss my connection in LA, and arrive in Orange County (at the newly named John Wayne Airport) just in time. I reach the Physics department colloquium, which I'm supposed to host this time, about halfway through a talk on Jupiter by a Caltech Voyager astronomer, Andy Ingersoll. Good stuff. We talk at the wine and cheese afterward, and I get the latest scoop on the moons. Then some work with Keith Kato, pick up the mail, and home for a late supper and a few blissful moments spent simply standing under the olive tree and looking at the Pacific. Odd name; it's the least peaceful of all the oceans I know.

Saturday, May 31. Open my mail and find (a) a paper from PHYSICS OF FLUIDS to review; (b) 2 fanzines; (c) letter from FUTURE LIFE about a personal opinion piece from me; (d) copies of the cover Ted White got Dan Steffan to draw for the new issue of VOID we're planning; (e) galleys of a critical piece on aliens in SF I did for a volume to come from Southern Illinois Press, called BRIDGES TO SF (I gave a talk at the first Eaton Conference on SF at UCR-iverside, which was fun because I got to put in a lot of jokes; writing it up was work, but publishing the proceedings of the conference will probably help it establish itself, it says here.); (f) a paper from PLASMA PHYSICS to review; (g) "Exposures", rejected by Terry Carr. I had more or less guessed he wouldn't like it, since it is an underplayed piece, but his comment that the style is "flat" mystifies me. Oh, well; I'm going to do another

draft, anyway, so I resolutely forget Terry's comments until I have worked through the new elements in my own mind. It is probably true that an attempt to portray the way a scientist confronts a problem (or in critical hyperbole, The Unknown) will seem undramatic and maybe even falsely quiet to most readers. One must keep that in mind.

Sunday, June 1. Write a bit in the morning, trying to get the sense of a scene in the novel. I've started thinking of the book as a set of scenes to be attacked one at a time and stacked atop each other. One of the hardest things in writing, for me, is the realization that the reader goes through all your carefully-wrought passages and plot turns like the wind, gobbling them up, processing, living, the drama at a pace that takes you months. So the reader inevitably sees a different book, has a different sense of the pace. How does a writer correct for that? I dunno, really. Rereading helps, but after a few readings of a poured-over text, I become blind to it and can't see it fresh for many months. This is one thing which forces my drawn-out style of writing novels.

I get off a note to Vicki Shochet at Berkley/Putnam, changing a word in the galleys of JUPITER PROJECT, which appears in updated form this October; the latest notions about Ganymede, learned yesterday from Andy, makes this necessary. Of course, next year the opinions will probably be different, but ...

Monday, June 2. It's beginning to look as though the radiation processes in our current experiments are similar to those which occur in the Type III solar radio bursts. These are intense cascades of radio noise emitted when a volley of weakly relativistic electrons are ejected from the sun. The electrons pass through the near-solar plasma and excite plasma waves, which then lead



to radiation. The complex way the plasma waves turn into bona fide electromagnetic radiation is a subject of decades-old discussion, with a lot of Russian theorists involved. The American theorists have proposed an interesting mechanism, with the Russians saying it was implicit in their earlier work anyway. (They seldom like ideas unless they thought of them first.) But our data is compatible with a certain modification of the recent theory, which means the mechanism may be widespread. This would be the first time a lab experiment has shed light on an astrophysical process of this kind. I resolve to write it up for PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS.

One parenthetical point is that a particular aspect of turbulence theory is needed to complete the calculation of radiated power in our experiments, and I had resolved to do the calculation soon. But a few weeks before Dean Smith at Colorado, called to say he'd found the mathematics worked out in a new paper in the Soviet literature. Dean speaks Russian and so is about a year ahead of the translation service. The calculation is quite specifically directed at the parameter range appropriate to our lab experiments. Question: Why does it appear naked, without reference to any application? It seems unlikely someone would just up and do this problem without motivation. So why have no experiments similar to ours been mentioned in the Soviet literature?

A further implication is that charged particle weapons, passing through our atmosphere, very probably emit radio waves. Coincidentally, I receive today a call from my twin brother, Jim, who is working on assessment of Soviet progress in charged

particle devices. He listens to my story about the Soviet paper and remarks that, indeed, it seems beams would emit radio waves, but no one in the US has considered this yet. We both wonder if the surfacing of this Russian paper is a tip of an iceberg.

This is about as close to defense-related work as I get. I put it out of my mind and spend the afternoon writing the PHYSREVLETTERS paper. One virtue of being a part-time writer is that you can pound out a scientific paper at what is, for a scientist, lightning speed. I finish the paper in three hours.

The evening's mail brings a critical paper on SF. I read it over quickly after dinner and after putting the kids to bed. Joan has a meeting connected with her work on art, so I read some Faulkner and mull over the vast span between High Lit and scruffy ol' scifi. In the eyes of many it is a true abyss. I remember that several people have remarked to me that I seemed influenced by, among others, Silverberg. In my frame, though, both Sberg and myself are influenced by modern literature itself, a fraction of Sberg's short stories and perhaps a quarter of his prominent novels. In the mid 70s it simply seemed he was an editor who was open to variant ways of telling a story, so I sent him some work. The ways of translating techniques from the "mainstream" into SF are many and varied, and seldom does direct imposition work; the subject matter is too different. Actually, how anybody could see Sberg themes or approaches in my work is a mystery to me.

But it does seem to me anyone with ambition in SF must try to learn from the experiments of his peers,

because the going is tough here, and we are largely without a critical audience which can mirror our concerns. The critics are busy unearthing Wells and embalming LeGuin, so a practising writer gets no useful feedback. As the field becomes more mature (in something more than the sense that mature means old enough to go see dirty movies) maybe this will improve. In part, development of some SF writers is held back by, to use Carol Carr's phrase, agoraphobia: fear of the literary marketplace. I wonder how strongly it acts on writers on the margin, of whom there are many. Thank God my limitations are my own, and not imposed from outside.

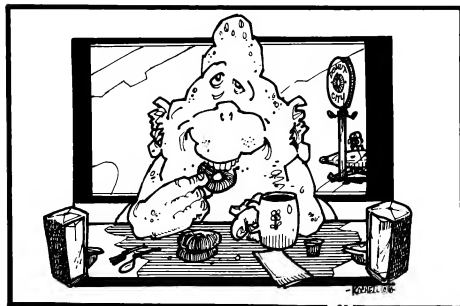
Tuesday, June 3. More work on the experiment. Take the figures down to get them spruced up for the PRL paper.

I write a quick page for the Lilapa mailing. Lilapa is an amateur press association which essentially functions as a letter-substitute among its members, who are Bob Tucker, Bill Rotsler, Silverberg, Carr, Norm Clarke, Boyd Raeburn, Bob Shaw, Sid Coleman, Jim and Hilary Benford, Joan and me, Dick Ellington (6 Pat), Steve and Grania Davis, the Busbies, Tom Perry, and Dean Grennell; old-time fans and pros.

I leave the University early and meet my family in Bluebird Park, Laguna. It is Mark's 7th birthday and 12 of his friends are there with Alyson to eat cake and play softball. Running the game among 14 fierce players turns out to require more diplomacy than I'd anticipated, but we make it through without major disputes. I can remember, wryly, being just as competitive as they were, at that age.

Home, put the still-excited kids to bed, and relax with a bottle of wine. I reread these diary pages. My intention has been to simply put it all down, not forcing the events to make some point -- that's the job of fiction -- but instead to see, in part for my own curiosity, how all the frayed details of the professional life twine together. It is an unusual act, doing science and writing about it in fiction at the same time. Lately I've been trying to enlist the readers' responses to the devices of realism, in the cause of the fantastic. An odd enterprise. Reading through these days, I can't sum them up. They're just there. In a few years they'll be gone utterly, except for some scraps of memory, a few bits of fiction, cancelled checks and tax returns.

Joan comes into my office, where I've just typed this, and we go to bed.





# THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

FREDDY'S BOOK

By John Gardner  
Knopf, 1980, 246 pp., \$10.00

It used to be, back before fantasy became an established publishing category, that virtually any fantasy book that got published was something very special. You know: GÖRGENHAST, THE LORD OF THE RINGS, JURGEN, THE BROKEN SWORD. All unique, one-of-a-kind books. The problem since the fantasy boom has been that too many fake-medieval fantasy novels have been about as interchangeable and as interesting as Women's hystericals (or, to borrow Rachel Payes' term, bodice-rippers). As a result, when I read FREDDY'S BOOK immediately after attempting a routine Del Rey paperback Dungeons & Dragons analogue, the shock was like jumping into a cold swimming pool after a long time in the sauna. It's that different. FREDDY'S BOOK is one of those special books. I suppose at the height of the fantasy boom they come along about as often as they always did, which is infrequently. It's a book with real intelligence behind it, with real substance. And Gardner can write. (This I did not previously know. It's the first thing of his I have read.) His people are real. His descriptions are vivid. His imagery stays with you.

The book is also a bit of a puzzler. Some readers will object to the long preface, in which a touring lecturer meets a professor who claims to have a son who is a "monster", then goes to the professor's house for a tedious and exasperating visit, ultimately to meet -- Freddy, a shy, obese giant of a youth who lives in almost total isolation from the world in a book-filled room.

The first irony one notices is that Freddy, a physical and emotional cripple, is hardly the giant of a fairy tale, and yet he has written a book (the text of which takes 75% of the novel) which rather does resemble a fairy tale. Well, it does and it doesn't. It's a story set in 16th Century Sweden, incorporating a lot of real history (Freddy's father is a famous historian of Scandinavia), about how one man is aided by the Devil and becomes king, while his kinsman, a knight, is ultimately sent on a seemingly mad mission to kill the Devil. Along the way, there is

a lot of treachery. A completely cynical, morally exhausted bishop changes sides a few times before finally accompanying the knight on his quest. There is a tender sequence dealing simply with the joys of being home, and the knight's love for his family. (Of course events drag him away.) In other words, for all the fantastic goings-on, the story has a realistic streak to it, while at the same time remaining rather overtly an allegory. (In the medieval sense -- after the example of the best works of the period anyway, where the "story" and allegory both dovetail into one another unobtrusively, as opposed to the heavy-handed PILGRIM'S PROGRESS approach.) Ultimately, the knight must come to some understanding of what evil means. Then he does battle with the Devil in a climax fully as bizarre and powerful as that final encounter with Satan in Dante. All of this eerily echoes the concerns of Freddy, the reclusive giant. The prologue is there for a definite purpose. If the book has any serious failing, it is that we don't see enough of Freddy to readily be able to recognize the stamp of his personality on the main story. Still, it's all there. The book turns on itself, over and over to reveal new subtleties.

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EVERYTHING THAT IS, I KNOW IT. IF I DON'T, IT ISN'T KNOWLEDGE!

CARE TO SHOOT SOME CRAPS?



THE LAST DEFENDER OF CAMELOT

By Roger Zelazny  
Pocket, 1980, 308 pp., \$2.50

It's been a good while since Zelazny had a new collection out. This one is overdue and will doubtless be welcomed by anyone who hasn't read all these stories in their original appearances. Two of them, "Damnation Alley" and "He Who Shapes", are the original novella versions of what later became novels, and there are good reasons for preferring the originals. "Damnation Alley" particularly is more vigorous and direct than the novel. Zelazny prefers "He Who Shapes" to THE DREAM MASTER, even though that is a fairly successful book in its own right. The novella was the first in that category to win a Nebula and is a splendid piece of work, one of the few stories from

LEGAL? THIS IS CHITTABOIN IN CONTRACTS. WE JUST TURNED UP THIS CONTRACT SIGNED IN DISAPPEARING BLOOD.

HELL NO THE GUY DIDN'T HAVE LEUKEMIA!



the Mythological Craze of the 1960s to handle myth material correctly: i.e. not as gaudy decoration, or as basis for science fictional "retelling", but as an organizing metaphor to hold the story together. A myth, after all, is basically a large figurative construct which enables its audience to understand something which is otherwise beyond its grasp. It is neither true nor false; it is a device. (A scientific example would be the old "planetary" model of the atom.) The Zelazny story is about the destructive, forbidden love and much of the action takes place in engineered dreams, so it becomes entirely appropriate and fitting that the skeleton on which all this hangs is the story of Tristan and Isolde.

Some of the other more distinguished stories in the collection include "For a Breath I Tarry", which may be loosely described as Faust and Mephistopheles gone mechanical (but that is a simplification -- it is more); "Come Now the Power" (a 1966 Hugo nominee if I remember correctly), a touching account of a failing telepath's attempt to give a bedridden girl a vicarious life; and the title story, which I think is one of the best things Zelazny has done in years. It involves various Arthurian figures lingering in the present day but fortunately does not hinge on the old recognition gimmick. You know: surprise! The hero is simply Lancelot. Instead it is an exercise in the often rewarding sport of apocryphal endings. Ancient Greek poets work lots of stuff about what finally became of this or that hero of the Trojan War. A modern one wrote a sequel to the most famous of these, THE ODYSSEY. (He called it THE ODYSSEY, A MODERN SEQUEL, since the fad for numbered sequels hadn't set in yet, and we're spared THE ODYSSEY II.)

I even did one once, explaining what happened to Caliban after THE TEMPEST was over. Zelazny carries on a thread from the great tangle (ball of yarns?) of the Arthurian cycle, revealing what finally became of Lancelot, the ensorcelled Merlin, Morgan La Fay, and (maybe?) the Holy Grail. This story won a Balrog award.

Other superior effort is "The Engine at the Heartspring's Center". Also included are a selection of Zelazny's early short-shorts from Cele Goldsmith's magazines (including his first two professional pieces) and some very recent work which strikes me as rudimentary and lacking the lyrical quality of his very best. Among the very early ones are some of the screwball humor pieces, the likes of which he seldom does anymore. "The Stainless Steel Leech" for example, is about a robot vamp-

The cover by Carl Lundgren is striking, but a little flat to my eye.

#### THE RAGGED EDGE OF SCIENCE

By L. Sprague de Camp  
Owlswick Press, 1980, 244pp., \$16.00

This is a collection of essays from various magazines, 1950-76, a sort of companion to SPIRITS STARS & SPELLS, but not organized as a single work the way that book is. A little bit of material overlaps, but not much. As usual, all is written in de Camp's lucid, informative style.

Some of the articles debunk various crank ideas. All of them at least touch on areas from which pseudo-science and cultism spring. Thus we have the scientific explanations for various archeological wonders which von Daniken would have us believe are the work of spacemen (also an amusing review of CHARIOTS OF THE GODS?). Fantasy readers might be particularly interested in "The Quarter-Acre Round Table". Fans of Charles Saunders' Imaro series might want to read about a real Black African civilization in "The Pyramids of Kush". Most of you, I think, will appreciate the opportunity to learn about (from more than hearsay) such things as the alleged Mount Shasta mystery (which keeps turning up in science fiction), the Kabbalah (which is not a NECRONOMICON), etc. All of it becomes useful when you encounter the old superstitions still alive and well. Brides Murphy is deftly demolished on linguistic grounds in less than a page. And then there's "The Great Satanist Plot", which I would have found useful a few weeks before I read it, when I met a man whose nephew fell under the sway of a fundamentalist preacher and really believed that the Masons are devil worshippers. He also claimed that Catholics are "just as bad". As it turns out, the Papacy started the rumor about the Masons. Not having

this bit of info handy, I suggested to the uncle that he tell his nephew (who is also convinced that Jimmy Carter is a born-again Satanist) that Ronald Reagan is the Anti-Christ since he has three names of six letters each, in hope that this would snap him out of it.

A valuable addition to the Crankology section of any library.

#### SAMUEL R. DELANY: PRIMARY & SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY, 1962-79

By Michael Peplow & Robert Bravard  
G.K. Hall and Co, 1980, 178 pp., \$15

#### ROGER ZELAZNY: A PRIMARY & SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

By Joseph L. Sanders  
G.K. Hall and Co, 1980, 154 pp., \$15

#### JULES VERNE, A PRIMARY & SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

By Edward J. Gallagher  
G.K. Hall and Co, 1980, 387 pp., \$30

The latest volumes in the G.K. Hall bibliography series. All are first-rate works of scholarship. I read the Zelazny with particular interest since I am involved in a similar project for Underwood-Miller. As far as I can tell, we've got some Sanders doesn't know about, and the reverse may be true. There is an informative introduction, plus listings of fiction, non-fiction and writings about, plus some appendices. The Delany volume has an even more extensive introduction and lots of surprising information about early appearances, unpublished novels and the like. I think I note a touch of defensiveness in the "about" section, with hostile reactions to IHALGREEN downplayed. Or else the authors assume that anybody seriously enough interested to buy this book has only minimal interest in such. Entry D196 puzzles me:

"Schweitzer, Darrell. "Dhalgren". Science Fiction and Fantasy Review, 87 (February), R18-19 "

This is marked "unseen". If they ever find it, I'd appreciate seeing a copy. I haven't the foggiest notion of what it is. I'm not even sure what the periodical was. (Delap's, Searies', and the Borgo Press zine never lasted 87 issues, and to the best of my knowledge I never wrote a review of IHALGREEN for anybody. I did write an article yclept "Dully Grinning Delany Descends To Disaster" which ran in GOBLIN'S GROTTO and later in OUTWORLDS, but they didn't list it.

The Verne bibliography is for libraries only, I suspect.

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# THE ALIEN INVASION

BY LARRY NIVEN

This fast-breaking news flash ... should have reached you fifteen years ago. Sorry, gang, I was slow on the uptake. The Pierson's puppeteers must have been on Earth for much longer than that, but it's been at least fifteen years since they first showed their hand.

We've known about these aliens for about that long. They rule a sizeable interstellar trading empire. Three-legged creatures four feet tall at the shoulder, two-headed, with mouths that serve also as hands and a brain case between the bases of the necks ... their biological skills must be almost magical, to have disguised themselves as human. They should have changed their characters too, since that was what gave them away.

The puppeteers are cowards. No, that's too simplistic. Cowardice is a philosophy and a religion with the puppeteers. They are fanatics as regards safety. On the puppeteer world there are no hard surfaces and no sharp corners to raise bruises. Their machinery and their power sources are infinitely dependable.

And they caused the Man-Kzin Wars in order to breed a "rational" kzin; they brought into being the Birthright lotteries in order to experiment with human evolution; they caused the Fall of the Cities on the Ringworld in order to gain a trade advantage. Clearly the puppeteers love to meddle, especially with alien species.

It now seems certain that Ralph Nader is a Pierson's puppeteer. His record speaks for itself: a fanatical pursuit of safety in all things, often to the point of madness. But there is corroborating evidence.

1) Ralph Nader has been quoted as saying that plutonium is the most toxic substance on Earth. Now, there are not many poisons that will signal you from across a room, if you're carrying a Geiger counter. But Mr. Nader's statement is stranger than that. It is as if he never heard of botulism toxin, which is thousands of times more toxic than plutonium. How many humans among you have never heard of botulism toxin? Could it be that his species is immune to botulism toxin?

2) Mr. Nader is known to have switched from an electric typewriter to a manual, in order to save electrical power. It's easy enough to compute that the power he saves in



this fashion would be the same if he had changed a 100-watt bulb for a 40-watt bulb, anywhere in his house. It's tempting to jump to the conclusion that the man can't add and subtract. This is difficult to believe of a Pierson's puppeteer.

But ... puppeteers throw huge amounts of power around very casually. In escaping the galactic core explosion they didn't bother with spacecraft; their Fleet consists of five worlds moving almost at light-speed. Mr. Nader may be confused by a problem of scale. An electric typewriter uses too little power for a puppeteer to notice.

3) Consider the automobile seat belt as of, say, 1974. That seat belt was designed to Mr. Nader's specifications. I own a 1974 car. My seat belt not only screams at me if I don't have it fastened, but won't let me start the car.

And a woman was raped by four big men because her car wouldn't start. They didn't give her time to fasten her seat belt. Any human being could have predicted such a result.

And any human being could have predicted that strokes and ulcers and heart attacks would be caused by a car owner's frustration with his arrogant machinery. Or with the 55mph speed limit, for that matter. Ralph Nader didn't.

4) You want more proof? There's a way to go after it. If Mr. Nader is indeed a Pierson's puppeteer, or even if he fears atomics as much as he claims, he certainly carries a Geiger counter at all times. Finding it may take some skill. It could be wristwatch-sized, or ring-sized or even implanted.

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We have no way of knowing how many puppeteers now wander among us in human guise, going about their

mission to turn the Earth into a world safe for Pierson's puppeteers ... and a world desperate to purchase power from the puppeteer-owned General Products Corporation. But they should be easy to recognize.

They are compulsive meddlers; they are fanatics on the subject of safety; their meddling causes many deaths due to power brown-outs and blackouts, because they don't understand industrial power at the relatively tiny levels practiced on Earth. They don't want us doing research in DNA, because we might stumble onto their own methods. Their understanding of human beings is faulty.

If a two-headed, three-legged creature has enough biological skill to disguise itself as human, it may equally well be using dolphin or whale form to meddle with the customs and evolution of those intelligent races. Now, a good many organizations, including Jacques Cousteau's, are trying both to save the whales and to ban nuclear power plants. It seems a peculiar pairing of totally unrelated subjects -- unless these disguised puppeteers are trying both to build a world safe for puppeteers and to protect their spies among the cetacean population.

One more point. Puppeteers do not favor space travel. The human longing for the stars is not in them. A sane puppeteer is never seen off his own planet; he doesn't trust spacecraft. Our invaders did not come here willingly, and they are not sane even by puppeteer standards.

A Pierson's puppeteer may be expected to seek power of one kind or another. If he chooses politics, he will vote against funding for human-built spacecraft; in favor of ever more restrictions on nuclear power plants; against fusion research; and in favor of preserving the environment regardless of cost to citizens. What he says in public may sound idiotic to human beings. Problems of scale will confuse him; he may be found speaking of solar-powered automobiles and the like. His private dealings may follow puppeteer patterns: blackmail as a part of normal trading, for example, and an unhealthy level of paranoia.

As I say, they should be easy to recognize. And what do we do then?

Frankly, I haven't been able to think of a thing.

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# NOISE LEVEL

a column

john brunnner

## GO EAST, YOUNG MAN!

Among the minor beneficial spin-offs which have resulted from my agreeing to succeed Brian Aldiss as co-chairman of the European SF Association (organisers of the so-called "Eurocons" which in theory alternate between Eastern and Western Europe at two-year intervals), there came an invitation to be Guest of Honour at a convention in Krakow, Poland, in September 1980. Bob Shaw was also invited, and the organisers' plan was that we should fly to Warsaw, pick up the (blocked) ziotych owing to us for publication of our work over there, and continue by train or plane to Krakow.

Marjorie had a better idea. Looking at the map, she pointed out that in fact the overland distance was shorter than some trips we've undertaken to Greece or even Southern Italy, and moreover we could visit Josef Nesvadba (author of *VAMPIRES LTD.* and in *THE ROOTSTEPS OF THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN*) if we went via Prague. Moreover, I suddenly spotted on the likeliest return route a spa-town called Piestany, where my father went to be treated for a back injury in the 1930s, and which he had always spoken of with affection.

So we drove.

I must confess I was victim of the usual propaganda before we left, going to inordinate lengths to make sure a breakdown didn't inconvenience us unduly -- like renting a boxful of spare parts for our car from the Automobile Association ... but the machine is eight years old and of a discontinued type. (In the upshot, our only problem was a blown headlight bulb, and that was changed in France.) Moreover, I listened to expatriates and others who warned of five-hour customs searches at the border, and confiscation of all printed matter. Seeing as how we planned to take multiple copies of my books to give away ...

Was it worth it? Well, for the peace of mind, maybe. But in fact our only delays at frontiers or anywhere else were due to one single cause: the countries of Eastern Eur-

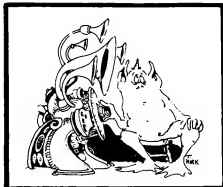
ope are desperately short of convertible currency, and oblige foreign visitors (unless, as was the case with us in Poland, they are officially invited) to exchange a minimum amount of pounds/dollars/marks/whatever you to cover petrol/gasoline, food and accommodation.

This did give us some small headaches in Czechoslovakia; we simply are not used to going around trying to get rid of money! We were staying with the Nesvadbys in their very pleasant ground-floor apartment facing on the Vinohrady Park -- and, as it happened, on a bloody great trench dug for new drainage-pipes, but that could have happened any time -- and being royally entertained, as for instance by being taken to a castle in the country (we would say palace) now owned by the Writers' Union, and to the national sculpture museum in a small town not far away, where we were variously fed and wine'd and kept amused. So we had to go to great lengths to get rid of this compulsory supply of Czech crowns, and were lucky to wind up being able to pour the last of them into our petrol-tank just before crossing the border into Poland.

Even so, we were astonished when, returning via another frontier post en route to Piestany, Bratislava and Vienna, we were told we couldn't make our compulsory exchange there -- we'd have to go to a hotel in the next town if we wanted some Czech money to buy lunch with ...

In Poland, we did have some slight difficulty. Oh, we had the same trouble disposing of our money, this time my earnings for the publication of three short stories, which added up to something like two months' salary for a middle-grade executive: no kidding! I was given over 13,000 ziotych; I was told most of my friends were earning about 7000 per month. But the problem wasn't simple; it was due to the fact that the Polish Embassy in London had omitted to warn us that, even though we'd been officially invited and were exempt from the tourist exchange obligation, there were exceptions -- like filling the tank of the car (which I got away with because the pumps were self-service and I'd already put 50 litres in before anyone thought to ask me for the government coupons) and hotel rooms, which we did have to use the night before and the night after the actual convention.

Said convention was distinctly different from anything one is used to in the West, and that's putting it mildly. It inspired me to create a Polish joke, which I had the bad



taste to try out on some of our friends, to wit: "How many Poles does it take to organise a science fiction convention?"

"I don't know -- how many?"

"One! Only unfortunately he's not on the committee this year."

What had happened was ... Well, it may not have escaped your notice that there had been some general disaffection with government-sponsored unions in Poland just prior to our arrival; in fact, at one point we were much afraid we'd have to cancel the trip.

The sponsoring body of this Krakow con was the local university students' union. The term had just begun, and the first thing the students had done on re-assembling for the new semester had been to abolish their union. Result: the banks refused to honour the cheques of an organisation that no longer existed ...

So the whole thing got under way a day late, and our accommodation was a sleazy transit hotel which students use when coming to Krakow for short courses (and which was closed down the day of our departure for cleaning, repairs, re-painting and disinfection), and we were supposed to be fed in a canteen some miles away, and we never got to see a complete programme of events, except a draft which had been circulated by post so late that we found our copy on returning to England, and which had in any case been ceremonially torn up in front of us in the Krakow Students' Union office as out of date.

Yet and still the trip was fun. I shall particularly remember gambling on the incomprehensible menu at the restaurant called Hawelka, facing the Old Market, and coming up time and again with excellent food, even though it did once take Marjorie three goes, two drawings and four waiters and waitresses to rustle up a fried egg. The whole centre of Krakow, inside the ancient fortifications (mostly demolished in the 19th Century), is a pedestrian zone, and

that makes it one of the pleasantest cities I have ever visited. History lies around every corner, naturally, and we had the good fortune to be shown some of it by Roman Czekaj, who works for the British Council in Warsaw but was born in Krakow and had time to show us around places like the coffee-house "Mihalika's Cave", full of turn-of-the-century souvenirs and puppets used to put on satirical plays fifty years ago.

We shall not in a hurry forget these contacts with the past, which is far more alive in Eastern Europe than in our part of the world, like the trumpeter sounding the hours from the tower of the Krakow cathedral, and breaking off partway through to commemorate the day when a Tartar arrow took the trumpeter in the throat and someone had to relieve him. That was four hundred years ago, and it's still being kept up.

And if you want to see what one of those Tartars looked like, you buy a hobby-horse doll of him. For what did we walk into?

A folk festival! (For those who are unaware of it: the other passion Marjorie and I share is folklore, so this was a real coup.)

We were walking back from the old Bastion Gate where there is an open-air art exhibition, and suddenly we discovered we were following a traditional folk-band. In the great square of the Old Market they had set up stalls selling -- and demonstrating -- traditional crafts like pottery, leatherwork, weaving, lace-making, carving and so on, and there was this huge dais with about 800 watts amplification laid on, and bands and teams of dancers and choirs of singers and kids in traditional costume ...

It was tremendous. It was the one time during our visit to Poland when we saw everybody smiling.

Traveling around this world of ours is always like making a journey through time. And I don't mean that, in the present case, simply because (harking back to Czechoslovakia) I sat down at the desk where Karel Capek used to work -- the author of RUR and WAR WITH THE NEUTS, of course -- and wrote a tribute to his memory in a leather-bound book which has been in use for a generation.

No, I mean it far more because what I saw in Poland and Czechoslovakia carried me back to Britain under post-war rationing and to what I've read about and heard about, the United States under the grey oppression of the McCarthy era: on the one hand, the sheer economic misery which afflicted us Britons because we were

outright bankrupt after "winning" World War II; on the other, the dismal resignation to not being able to do whatever the hell you feel like doing for fear it might be called "subversive".

Yet and still the people we met, and even those we just crossed on the street, or asked the way from, were as lively and likeable and friendly as anybody could wish.

Is it, can it be, that these people are under some sort of tyrannical yoke? If so, then the police are hiding -- neither in Prague nor in Krakow did I see as many police as in London or New York, and those I did were mainly in patrol cars in a hurry to get somewhere else.

Yet and still I know that Dr. Josef Nesvadba, for four years after the "events" of 1968, was dispatched to a country town to pursue a career unworthy of his talents, and all the film-scripts he had formerly written were of no avail to prevent his temporary exile.

By the same token, I recall the Hollywood producer turned property-developer whom Marjorie worked for in London, who had had to give up his career because Senator McCarthy and his goons regarded a line in a movie script like "Share and share like, that's democracy!" (spoken by a girl doing the washing-up to her husband, by the way, and foreshadowing Women's Lib!) as pro-Russian, and I further remember that masterpiece of doublethink which led opponents of Hitler to be described in the fifties as "premature anti-Fascists" if they turned in desperation to the Communist Party because it was the only body warning people about the Nazi threat.

You see what I mean when I say a sense of history comes over very strongly on a visit to Eastern Europe. Hearing that trumpeter in Krakow -- standing on the battlements of the Wawel Castle and looking over the Vistula -- admiring the painted coats-of-arms on a merchants' house in the Old Town Square in Prague -- looking at a public clock where the hours are not marked by regular hands but carved manikins, who have been marching on their solemn way for centuries with occasional interruptions from foreign invaders ...

This is something neither we nor our American cousins can truly appreciate.

All over Poland and Czechoslovakia we saw signs up to commemorate a remarkable and astonishing achievement. In 1980 it had been thirty-five years since anybody came by to sack the farms and rape the women

and burn the houses and loot the museums.

Thirty-five years.

I am forty-six years old. My country hasn't been invaded since 1066 except by soldiers in the service of the (notional) legal ruler. The United States has never been formally invaded, and indeed has tended to go rather the other way.

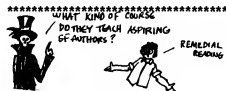
What casts a grey depressing shadow over these delightful people is less the omnipresent bulk of the Soviet Union (oh, it's there, make no mistake about it! And it's like all dinosaurs, sluggish and prepared to trample on any small, lively, active creature which threatens to move quicker and maybe change the world in irritating ways) than the absolute certainty that if the United States and the West in general, ever turn loose their weapons of indiscriminate destruction, they -- and come to that we British -- are doomed.

They do not expect the Russians to start a war, any more that I do. They share, in spite of all, a vivid recollection of what the last one actually was like; they do not think of it in terms of conquest or glory, but of ruined homes and dead bodies and lost kinfolk. Much as they hate the predicament they find themselves in, which I already compared to Britain the 1950s (long queues at shop-doors, many shortages down to and including toilet-paper), they are too well acquainted with wars of conquest with themselves as victims to want to support another. Complain as they do about the internal policies of their governments, there is one thing on which they are agreed: so long as their leaders are assured of a common foreign policy with the Russians, there is small chance of another war wrecking their cities and farms.

For this they will put up with more than you or I would.

I found this, to put it mildly, educational. I'm not used to thinking of those American and NATO missiles as being aimed at me. But all during our visits to Prague and Krakow the thought kept coming back: suppose WDMEX were to go wrong again now and not be caught in time ...?

Try it, if you can, as a mental exercise. Like I say, it's educational.



# JACK WILLIAMSON

CONDUCTED BY NEAL WILGUS

SFR: I think H.G. Wells' *THE TIME MACHINE* and the 1950s radio version of your classic *THE HUMANOIDS* just about tied in being my own introduction to science fiction, back in my Golden Age (13), so naturally I want to ask a number of questions about *THE HUMANOIDS*. It might be appropriate to start with something on Wells, however, since he's a special interest of yours also. I'm thinking of course, of your doctorate research on Wells which resulted in *H.G. WELLS: CRITIC OF PROGRESS*. Is it safe to say -- we all came out of Wells' *TIME MACHINE*?

WILLIAMSON: It does make a sort of sense to say we all came out of Wells' *TIME MACHINE*. Of course he didn't invent SF. Mary Shelley and Poe and Verne and a lot of others had led the way. But I think he was the first of us who knew Darwinian evolution. That gave him a sense of how change happens and a way to see the future that nobody else had found. I think that does explain his work -- his whole life. It shaped our way of thinking.

SFR: In the afterword to the new expanded edition of *THE HUMANOIDS*, you note that it was while studying

Wells' early SF that the "Autobiographical interpretation" of *THE HUMANOIDS* became clear to you. That is, the *HUMANOIDS* character Clay Forester, who represents the romantic rebellion of your youth, paralleled the life of Wells' contemporary George Gissing, while Frank Ironsmith, who cooperates with the Humanoids, parallels Wells himself as the successful compromises of maturity. Since *THE HUMANOIDS* is told mostly from Forester's point of view and Ironsmith is a traitor and sellout in Forester's view -- who is the real "hero" of the story?

WILLIAMSON: I'm not sure the story has a hero. I've always been far better pleased with the craftsmanship and feeling of the original novella, "With Folded Hands". The novel was written not so much because I had any better solution to the problem as because I was excited by the chance to sell a serial to Campbell. Given our own evolutionary inheritance, I think we're all caught in a universal conflict between our individual needs and impulses on one hand and the demands of our society on the other. Wells and Gissing in their own lives, dramatize the issues.

Gissing refused to compromise. The individualist to the end, he destroyed himself. Wells was able to make all sorts of rewarding compromises. I don't think any complete and final resolution is ever possible. In the novel, as I see it, Ironsmith is clearly the winner, rewarded by the Humanoids. Forester is a tragic victim of his unyielding, romantic selfhood. When I wrote the novel, my sympathies were clearly with Forester, but still I understood that he was doomed.

SFR: Do you ever regret that evolution from Forester/Gissing to Ironsmith/Wells?

WILLIAMSON: Certainly. But not so keenly now as I did thirty years ago. I grew up a sort of passive rebel, a generally isolated and somewhat hostile outsider. I have gradually come to see the necessity and enjoy the rewards of what I guess I can call the social compromise. I'm intrigued by all the accumulating evidence from the sociobiologists and certain anthropologists that our minds as much as our bodies are shaped by our evolutionary past. Wells, I think, was ahead of his time in his awareness of this.

SFR: This may be picking nits, but just out of curiosity -- why is the inventor of the Humanoids named Sledge in "With Folded Hands", and Mansfield in *THE HUMANOIDS*? Why wasn't the name made to conform in the new edition that contains both stories?

WILLIAMSON: Credit for the changed names in *THE HUMANOIDS* is due to Orrin Keepnews, who was an editor at Simon and Schuster when they bought book rights. He wanted a lot of changes I probably shouldn't have made, but that was my first book sale to a major publisher and I was anxious to play the game.

I might add that the names in the book were chosen to fit a convention of my own. Since the setting is on another planet in the far future, certainly the people are not speaking English, yet -- following a rule of Wells himself -- I wanted to make everything except the Humanoids seem as familiar as possible. My convention was that the book was translated into our English by a sys-





tem in which names are represented by images, usually physical. Hence Sledge. Hence, also Mansfield.

I still prefer Sledge. But I didn't make any revisions in the book for the Avon reprint. Revision, once begun, can go on forever. I feel that generally my time is better spent in writing something new. In fact, when Fred Pohl offered me the contract to do *THE HUMANOID TOUCH*, I felt pretty reluctant to go back to the Humanoids at all. I'm grateful, now, that he made me an offer I could not refuse.

SFR: About that controversial ending -- I'm afraid I gullibly accepted the Humanoids-turn-out-to-be-good-guys-at-the-last-minute plot at face value and missed your "dystopian" twist altogether, each time I've read *THE HUMANOID TOUCH*. In your discussion of the different interpretations in the Afterword to the expanded edition it seems to me you neglected this alternative -- that the face value acceptance of the Humanoids is correct and they really are the best thing that could happen to the human race. Isn't that what Ironsmith is all about?

WILLIAMSON: It seems to me that any evaluation of the ending is necessarily relative, simply because of the old conflict between the individual and society has no final solution. We're all born naked shrieking individualists. Most of our individual pleasures and pains will always be individual things. But we can never live alone. We have to be socialized -- by our parents, by our peers, by all society. In the end, the rewards of social conformity may well become the highest of all. But each of us, individually, has to be conditioned to perceive that, and none of us is ever completely conditioned. Incidentally, spending a couple of weeks in the People's Republic of China last year, I became convinced that the Chinese probably have the most efficient system for socialising the citizen now in operation.

SFR: Obviously *THE HUMANOID TOUCH* is a story with a number of meanings and messages but it's also a gripping melodrama. Would you say you are a story teller first and only secondarily interested in meanings and messages?

WILLIAMSON: I suppose I am a story-teller first. When I'm working on something, I need to be totally convinced, totally involved. That means that I must think of meanings as well as settings and characters and plots. I like to stop work, after a few pages of a short story or a few chap-

ters of a novel, to look for the themes so that they can be clarified and intensified. I have a feeling that meaning should be there, but that it should come from the story as it takes shape, not from me. Getting back to the stories about the Humanoids, I feel that they are more pessimistic about our technological future than I am.

SFR: Although I haven't seen it yet, I'm glad to hear of a sequel to *THE HUMANOID TOUCH* called *TEN TRILLION WISE MACHINES* -- looking forward to reading it. Why was there not an earlier sequel, or perhaps a *Humanoids* series, since that's a popular thing in SF?

WILLIAMSON: The sequel is now called *THE HUMANOID TOUCH*. Though I liked *TEN TRILLION WISE MACHINES*, that's a long title to go on the cover of a paperback, and the editors at Holt asked for something with "Humanoids" in it. Jay Kay Klein came up with *THE HUMANOID TOUCH* -- for which I mean to send him a suitably inscribed copy. Your question was more or less answered earlier. I was convinced that "With Folded Hands" had said all I really wanted to say about the humanoids. Fred Pohl convinced me that I was wrong.

SFR: As a professor of literature at Eastern New Mexico University during the 1960s and 70s, did you find serious acceptance of *THE HUMANOID TOUCH*, or SF in general, a problem? Is a science fiction classic like *THE HUMANOID TOUCH* ever likely to be accepted as a mainstream classic? A Classic -- with capital C?

WILLIAMSON: As a professor of English at ENMU, I found being a science fiction writer a considerable asset. I think most of my colleagues respected me for it. My science fiction course was popular with the students and certainly a delight for me. It's true that some members of the English department look down on science fiction -- and on nearly everything else written since the Eighteenth Century. But that was never really a problem for me. Our personal relations were smooth enough.

Certainly, I can see science fiction works accepted as mainstream classics. In most of the world, science fiction has always been part of the mainstream. Here in the United States, I think it got into the famous ghetto largely because of the accidental circumstances of the publishing industry that identified it as a pulp genre, at a time when we had three very distinct sorts of magazines, the quality group, the slicks



and the pulps. The quality magazines for people with education and brains, the slicks for people with money to support the advertizers and the pulps for the rest of us. I think we're slowly outliving the stigma.

But, about *THE HUMANOID TOUCH* as a mainstream classic, I certainly don't expect to witness that. Thirty years ago I had no notion that it would still be alive in 1980. I hope people do keep reading it. But I think "With Folded Hands" is much superior in terms of craftsmanship and impact -- and I'm holding my breath until I see what people think of *THE HUMANOID TOUCH*.

SFR: Like a lot of your stories (and a lot of SF in general), *THE HUMANOID TOUCH* is about the awakening of a superhero (Forester) -- and by implication about the next stage of evolution. It's been interesting to note that writers outside the SF world have begun to take Superman seriously. British existentialist Colin Wilson, for instance, who has made a career out of tracing the Superman theme all over the map and who points to A.E. Van Vogt's work as containing evolutionary insights. Do you think this is another SF theme about to catch up with us? Are we on the verge of the next step up?

WILLIAMSON: About the next stage of evolution, I think the most exciting futures are in genetic engineering. Up to now, evolution has been mostly by hit-or-miss trial and error. Within the next century, if biological process is allowed to continue, we can control it. The question, of course, is whether that will be al-

lowed. The issues are both ethical and practical, certainly worth hard debate. I won't try to predict the outcome, but the potentials are immense, for the science fiction writer as well as the genetic engineer. Incidentally, my next-to-last novel, **BROTHER TO DEMONS, BROTHER TO GODS**, was an effort to project the possibilities as far as I could. (My 1951 novel, **DRAGON'S ISLAND**, was published several years ahead of Watson and Crick and I wanted to take a new look.)

**SFR:** Most Williamson fans would probably agree that your "second masterpiece" is **DARKER THAN YOU THINK**, the science-fiction novel that originated in the fabled pulp magazine **UNKNOWN**, in the early 1940s. The thing that struck me about **DARKER** when I reread it recently, was the strangely compelling air of other-reality about it -- the feeling that everyday life is a mechanical sham and that there is another, more dynamic reality behind the facade. The same atmosphere seems to be present in other **UNKNOWN** classics such as Heinlein's **UNPLEASANT PROFESSION** OF JONATHAN HOAG, Hubbard's **FEAR** and others. Was this a suggestion or conscious policy on the part of **UNKNOWN**'s editor, John W. Campbell, Jr., or just something that developed on its own?

**WILLIAMSON:** The only comment comes to me is to remark that Campbell, in his uninterrupted monologues and in his famous letters, was always urging writers to use a principle of fantasy outlined by H.G. Wells -- though well enough known, of course, to such earlier writers as Defoe. The method is to use only one or impossible assumption in each story and make everything else seem as ordinary and logical as possible. I think a good deal of the effect of **DARKER THAN YOU THINK** comes from the fact that it is set in a very ordinary American city -- drawn at random, incidentally, from Topeka, Kansas.

**SFR:** **DARKER THAN YOU THINK** is fantasy in that it deals with witches and lycanthropy, yet there are pseudo-scientific explanations for all the magic. The same thing is true about many **UNKNOWN** fantasies -- was this a Campbell policy?

**WILLIAMSON:** Campbell certainly did not insist on scientific explanations in **UNKNOWN**. But, if you're trying to follow the Wellsian method, if you want to make everything logical and rational, you have to accept the fact that the logic and rationality of everyday life is nearly always based on science. Speaking personally, I need to convince myself of the truth

of what I'm writing -- to create an illusion of truth that holds for me as well as I hope it will for the reader. That involves asking how the story assumption can be related to science as well as to the rest of the known and accepted universe.

**SFR:** By the time you came to write **DARKER THAN YOU THINK** you had already explored psychoanalysis rather extensively -- is your own psychoanalytic experience reflected in Will Barbee's story -- or your other fiction?

**WILLIAMSON:** **DARKER** was written while I was under analysis with Dr. Charles W. Tidd. I spent a year with him while he was at the Morningside Clinic in Topeka, but then dropped out. Deciding I needed more, I followed him to Beverly Hills for another



year. Certainly the experience is reflected in the story. Dr. Glenn -- if I recall his name -- has aspects of Dr. Tidd. There is a stronger reflection in the theme of the story. In its resolution, Will Barbee comes to terms with things he has feared. He recognizes and accepts elements of himself that he has never admitted. Something of the same sort was happening to me. I feel that the basic aim of analysis is to come to know and like yourself. I think the power of the story -- if it has power -- comes from a successful dramatic representation of that sort of psychological change.

**SFR:** I was interested to note in your piece on "The Campbell Era" (in **ALGOL**) that you once met the fabled Jack Parsons, the rocket designer and witch coven leader and that he took **DARKER THAN YOU THINK** very seriously. Do you have a following

among the present-day witches because of the book?

**WILLIAMSON:** I did meet John Parsons and I think he was anxious to meet me because he had read the novel. I imagine that he was a little disappointed that the story had pretty well used up my interest in witchcraft. As one result of the meeting I had an opportunity to attend a cult meeting that I found fascinating, though I never had any inclination to follow that up. I have had occasional letters from other witches -- I recall one in England -- who always seem to imagine that I am far deeper into the dark arts than I have ever been. Actually, about all things supernatural, I'm a pretty stubborn skeptic.

**SFR:** Is there likely to be a sequel to **DARKER THAN YOU THINK** to complement the new one to **THE HUMANOID**? Perhaps a view of what life will be like when Barbee and his kind establish a witch's utopia?

**WILLIAMSON:** I have no plans for a sequel to **DARKER**. I think much of the effect of the original novel comes from the realistic contemporary setting, an effect which would be hard to preserve in a witch's utopia.

**SFR:** In both of the books we've been discussing, as well as in short stories such as "Hindsight", you've used manipulation of probability by human will power as a pseudo-science explanation to justify ESP and other psi-powers that defy presently understood physics. Is this just a convenient bit of fiction you've found useful in story telling -- or do you think psychophysical control of probability may eventually become a reality, as many SF ideas have in the past?

**WILLIAMSON:** My skepticism extends to ESP. When I was working on **THE HUMANOID** I read several of Rhine's books, but they opened my mind only briefly. None of the supposed evidence for ESP is convincing to me. But still I regard the psi element in my stories as more than "a convenient bit of fiction", because it is such a useful metaphor for all communication. I do feel that advances in communication are changing our culture and our world in more ways than we now realize, and that they seem likely to go on more rapidly than ever. The fictional psi effects give us a useful avenue of speculation about them.

**SFR:** I was struck by the almost Lovecraftian atmosphere in your first published story, "The Metal Man" -- which also struck me as the prototype of the UFO story. Were you

aware of HPL's work at the time "Metal Man" was written?

**WILLIAMSON:** When I wrote "The Metal Man" my own background in fantastic fiction was pretty well limited to a year or two of back numbers of AMAZING STORIES. The two stories that had most impressed me had been Merritt's THE PEOPLE OF THE PIT and Lovecraft's THE COLOR OUT OF SPACE. There must have been influences from both of them.

**SFR:** "The Metal Man" makes reference to the AEC and since the story dates from 1928 and the Atomic Energy Commission wasn't created until 1947 I assume the story was updated a bit for publication in THE PANDORA EFFECT. Are other Williamson reissues such as the Legion of Space series also updated?

**WILLIAMSON:** THE METAL MAN was updated for THE PANDORA EFFECT. I can think of few other substantial revisions made so late in the game, except for several other magazine pieces revised for book publication. The original UNKNOWN version of DARKER THAN YOU THINK was only 40,000 words. The book is more than twice that long.

**SFR:** In the new introduction to THE HUMANOIDS you say that despite your misgivings about atomic power -- misgivings which in part generated THE HUMANOIDS and stories like "The Equalizer" -- that you are now strongly pro-nuke. My own misgivings about nuclear power center mainly around the fact that after 30 years of the peaceful atom (so-called) we still haven't figured out what to do with the radioactive waste. Since New Mexico has been pushed as a dumping ground for some of those wastes (and resisted) the issue strikes pretty close to home here in the Southwest. Are you really satisfied, a year after Three Mile Island, that nuclear power and the attendant waste disposal is safe?

**WILLIAMSON:** My own opinion is that we do know what to do with radioactive wastes. The great problem about disposal is the largely irrational terror of them. Of course, nothing in life is totally safe, but on the record use through a whole generation, nuclear energy has proven itself far safer than coal or even oil. Burning coal releases a lot more radioactivity than has ever escaped from nuclear plants. It's interesting that Americans are so little troubled by killing 50,000 people a year with private automobiles and go into hysteria about the possibility that Three Mile Island will cause maybe one death from cancer in maybe twenty years. If we keep the

wastes available in ponds or in geologic sites, there is a good chance that the techniques of the next century will make it possible to reuse them for generating more power than we got the first time through.

**SFR:** You've often commented on the classification of SF writers into optimists and pessimists and have consistently included yourself among the pessimists. Yet your works that I'm familiar with -- even downbeat classics like THE HUMANOIDS and DARKER THAN YOU THINK -- don't strike as all that pessimistic and your characters certainly don't give up in despair like many modern anti-heroes.

**WILLIAMSON:** I do regard myself as generally optimistic. I think the pessimistic sort of SF has an unfortunate edge, simply because a fire alarm -- even a false alarm -- is so much more exciting than the assurance that all is well. I think we have too much pessimism haunting us and that our undue terror of technology keeps us from developing new technologies that could go on solving our problems. I like to say that technology has been causing problems since man learned to start fires. In the end, we generally manage to live with them.

**SFR:** In addition to the numerous awards you've won -- including the recent New Mexico Governor's Award which is probably not widely known in the SF world -- you've served two terms as president of Science Fiction Writers of America. What's your reaction to Christopher Priest's attack on the SFMA in a recent SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW? Should the SFMA -- and the Hugo and Nebula awards -- be abolished as Priest seems to be suggesting?

**WILLIAMSON:** I have written a brief answer to Chris Priest for SFR. I do respect his concerns about the awards, but I think the Nebulas and Hugos -- and SFMA -- are worth preserving. I think Chris is writing from the viewpoint of the self-sufficient and dedicated artist, who probably doesn't need them. But, as fellow craftsmen in SFMA, we can help each other in many ways. One of the ways is in the effort to get paid for what we write. The Nebula selection process isn't perfect. I think we have improved it. The big problem with all literary awards is the fact that there is no objective standard of evaluation. Art has to be evaluated subjectively, and different people make different evaluations -- otherwise, only a dozen or so writers could produce all the fic-

tion that anybody wants. I think the awards do encourage and reward the creation of fine science fiction.

**SFR:** I'm always interested in the creative process so I like to ask about how writers work and where they get their ideas. Do you have any insights on how to tap the creative levels?

**WILLIAMSON:** I used to think that the whole process of writing could be rationalized, reduced to a system. Once I set out to keep an elaborate file of elements to be combined into fiction, settings and plots and characters and themes. My file became a graveyard for ideas. I never needed or wanted to look into it for anything. What I write comes out of impressions and emotions and concerns that are alive in my mind at the time of writing. I try to allow a role for the unconscious, try not to outline anything too rigidly, try to trust that the story will come to live and grow in my mind and emotions as it takes form on paper.

**SFR:** Finally, what new projects are in the works now that you've gotten back to full-time writing again?

**WILLIAMSON:** My working title for the novel-in-progress is THE QUEEN OF THE LEGION. Another story of the Legion of Space, with a girl -- growing into a woman -- as protagonist. I was doubtful at first about being able to present her well, but I've come to know and like her now. Most of my doubts are gone. I'm doing it for Pocket Books. It should have been finished a year and more ago, but THE HUMANOID TOUCH took longer than I had expected, and SFMA took a lot of my time and energy for two years. The editors have been remarkably patient. I bought a word processor a few months ago, and am feeling fairly fluent in its language. With better than half the book into the computer and safely back out again, I feel that it is shaping up better than I had hoped for.

As for other items: Fred Pohl and I still have a collaboration to complete. WALL AROUND A STAR to carry on the action begun in THE FARTHEST STAR. I hope that my share of the book is almost done, and I look forward to seeing the work in print -- I dare not say when. A couple of short stories coming up, though I prefer longer things. For a year or so, I've been planning another novel that I'm feeling more and more anxious to start. But it's far better to write something than to talk or write about it.

**SFR:** Thank you, Mr. Williamson.

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# SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

## KIRK'S WORKS—AN INDEX OF THE ART OF TIM KIRK

Edited by George Beahm  
Heresy Press, \$10.00  
713 Paul Street,  
Newport News, VA 23605

An exceptionally fine index featuring a color cover of Tim at his wrap-around best in humor, and including 225 of his best illustrations and paintings from his beginnings in fandom and prodrom to date. Many from the early SFRs and PSYs.

There's a long interview with Tim by Beahm, many photos of Tim at work and play.... And the running index of his work seems as complete as humanly possible.

This 9x12 122-page book of high quality paper and printing, is well worth the money.

For those of exclusive tastes there is a limited edition of 100 numbered copies, signed by the artist, editor and book designer (Michael Synes), with dust wrapper for the hardbound version of Red Silver-terx and gold foil lettering. There are 80 copies available at \$25. each.

Mustn't forget the lovely George Barr painting in color which celebrates Tim and his creatures, in the frontispiece position.

## FANTASY NEWSLETTER #52

Edited and published by Paul and Susan Allen. \$1.95

P.O. Box 170A

Rochester, NY 14601

This is a class production. Offset, always a fine cover, usually by Fabian, columns by Karl Edward Wagner, Susan Schwartz, and an interview with this issue with Robert Reginald, plus listings and reviews of current and projected fantasy (and sf) publishing...photos, good artwork inside...A very valuable, necessary monthly magazine.

I suspect a bit overpriced, though, at \$1.95 for 32 pages including covers and 4+ pages of ads.

Just as among the prozines there is a weeding-out process as The Market makes its choices, so in the sf/fantasy newsmag and semi-prozine field there is now going on a thinning out as customers decide they can't afford any longer to buy three or four semi-prozines, and cut back to one or two. It'll be interesting to see who survives.



## WONDER WART-HOG AND THE NURDS OF

NOVEMBER

By Gilbert Sheldon \$7.50 by mail.  
Rip Off Press.

Mild-mannered Philbert Desanex, a wimp, is really Wonder Wart Hog, a super being from another planet living on Earth in disguise.

So this take-off on Superman is a comic strip satire which enters into all kinds of easy battles: welfare, politics, nuclear terror, pro football, science fiction, motorcycle and car racing, pestilence, famine, economic collapse, and romantic love...to name a few. There is some good invention and some good lines, but too much is knee jerk and cliché.

I guess you can't be subtle in comic strip format, eh?

And there's never any real tension: Wart-Hog is impossible to harm, being indestructible.

This is a softcover, quality book, 214 or so pages, good paper, color cover.

## THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE VOL. 5: BRAINS AND BRONZE—THE RISE OF ANCIENT GREECE.

By Larry Konkik  
Rip Off Press \$1.50  
POB 14158  
San Francisco, CA 94114

More great illustrated history, comic format. What fascinates and appalls about ancient times is the incredibly naked lust, murder, looting, revenge that prevailed in the highest circles—especially in the ruling circles. Life in those times was tough! Somehow Larry Konkik brings all this into focus with saving humor and insights. This is a remarkable series.

THE SIXTH BOOK OF VIRGIL FINLAY  
Edited by Gerry de la Ree \$15.75  
7 Cedarwood Lane  
Saddle River, NJ 07458

These large-size, hardbound, gloss-stock books are exceptionally well made, and the late Virgil Finlay deserves them. All of these 150 or so pen drawings are from Finlay's best period, when he was working with perfected techniques at highest skill levels.

This volume is of his astrological covers and interiors for ASTROLOGY YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE and EVERYWOMAN'S DAILY HOROSCOPE.

This is a must for Finlay lovers and artists who want to observe how a master of stipple and line achieved his effects.

## PONG #1

Writ & published by Ted White [1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046] and Dan Steffan [823 N. Wakefield St., Arlington, VA 22033].

PONG is two-weekly, personal, all the good things. It is available for T & R (Trade & Response) and all others pay \$5.00.

This is a good old fashioned faanzine, pure of heart and 4 pages offset.

## NEW LIBERTARIAN MANIFESTO

By Samuel Edward Konkik III  
New Libertarian Enterprises  
POB 1748  
Long Beach, CA 90801

In this booklet Sam puts forth his idealistic view of man's nature and (like statists of various stripes) ignores the other half of man's nature.

He sketches a scenario for the coming (he and others hope) conversion to a totally free, non-statist, Market-ruled economy, culture and society in America.

Rots o' ruck.

He convincingly shows that a partial free economy—an underground economy—already exists in varying degree in all countries, including that great muthaf of statism, communist Russia.

But he never directly answers the obvious question: if libertarianism, the free economy, are so inherently Good and natural, how come we don't have it, and how come there isn't much if any evidence of an "Agorist" society in the past? [A logical variation of "If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?"]

He, like other idealists, says in effect, "If only we could once establish our system everybody would

see its virtue and wouldn't want to go back to any degree of statism!"

But he's missing something: a degree of state control--of government!---is natural to mankind. We want it! We are perhaps instinctually wedded to government on every level--the family, the tribe, the city state, the nation....

If you can't find it in the past or the present, you won't have it in the future. Always something in between the pure extremes of total state control and total Market invisible control.

Statism isn't just an unfortunate disease mankind is subject to; it's part of our nature. In fact, you can make a better case for dictatorship than for freedom, as the best form of social organization for mankind, given man's history to date.

But Sam rejects any compromise, any attempt to use government to trend society toward a more free set-up. To deal with statism is to deal with the devil; those who do are impure, revisionists, and should be reviled and condemned.

So it goes.

#### THE MUCKRAKER'S MANUAL

By M. Harry \$7.95 + \$1 shipping.

Loompanics

P0B264

Mason, MI 48854

Loompanics has in past years published some beyond-the-pale books, some "underground" books, such as those which tell how to assume a different identity and accumulate "fake" ID, and books on cheap, home-made bombs, etc., as well as many on self-defense, knife-fighting, and so on.... Many on counter-culture living styles.

The Loompanics catalog is must reading for anyone who wants to get a glimpse of the tough, real world of killing, living different and thinking different.

This one, by "Harry", is by an experienced, no-shit reporter, and his tips and how-to's are hard-earned. It's not padded, and it's not in professorese. It's 127 pages of the true quill. If you wanted to write a novel about an investigative reporter, this would be a goldmine.

#### HOW TO ORGANIZE AND MANAGE YOUR OWN RELIGIOUS CULT

By Duke McCoy \$6.95 + \$1. shipping.

Step-by-step you are told chilling truths and savage realities about people, psycho-dynamics, and led...probably unwillingly...into a cunning, psychopathic, manipulative world. What Duke McCoy tells is true--you can smell its ugliness. But only a sociopath will actually go out and follow these rules, tips, schedules and become a cult leader.

It requires a person of such total solipsism and/or contempt for people, that all but a verrey few people in this world will find this book unuseable. Yet, as a source book for a novel---it's a treasure.

This also is available from Loompanics, as above.

#### THE WORLD POWER FOUNDATION---ITS GOALS AND PLATFORM

Edited by Harold Thomas \$6.95 + \$1. Loompanics, as above.

This seems a put-on, but you never know, sometimes. What the World Power Foundation wants to establish is: Slavery

Human Sacrifice

Polygamy & Polyandry

Morality equal to Pleasure.

Carnal Religions

Debt-free Economics

Promises, promises, promises.

The book does have a good "power" bibliography with capsule descriptions and reviews. Also a listing of what it calls Reactionary Publishers---meaning essentially anti-establishment libertarian, conspiracy and really reactionary publishers.

#### SCIENCE FICTION---A Review of Speculative Literature #4 \$2.25

Edited and Published by Van Ikin

Dept. of English

University of Sydney

New South Wales 2006

Australia

This is approximately the equivalent of England's FOUNDATION, although far inferior as to interest and format.

Who ever reads this professorial twaddle? More pertinent, who would ever pay to read it?

Nevertheless, if you wish to try a copy, the North American agent is Terry Green

9 Parkhurst Blvd.

Toronto, Ontario

CANADA M4G 2C4

Terry notes that #5 will cost \$2.50.

#### LIVING FREE

Written, edited and published by

Jim Stumm \$1.00

Box 29, Hiler Branch,

Kenmore, NY 14223

I've been meaning to review this magazine for a year. Jim lives free, on land he owns, and he believes in self liberation through self-sufficiency in food, energy, shelter, as much as possible.

LIVING FREE is a clearinghouse of self-help ideas and practices; there are detailed sketches for various devices, there are product reports (like the Koolatron solid-state fridge)...hints on scrounging and farming, building, cheap transportation....

This issue (#10) contains a short article/letter from John Freeman on "Auto Living--In a Pinch."

There are discussions of private power systems, container farming (with comparative year-to-year crop yields)...and other bits and pieces of fascinating lore, news and help.

Ten pages, letter-size, offset. Well worth it. He trades for zines.

#### THE SPACEGAMER #32 October 1980

7207 Onion Crossing Dr.

Austin, TX 78744

A very valuable magazine to those heavily into sf and fantasy games of various kinds. The hobby is big business now, and with a host of new games coming out all the time, the review section in this zine must be a must-read.

\$2.00 for a copy.

I heartily approve the use of a protective mailing cover over the full-color spaceship cover. Would that some other sf (fiction) magazines could do it if envelopes are not practicable.

#### SF COMMENTARY #60/61 \$3.00

Edited and published by Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia.

Offset, lettersize, 32 pages, and full of informed personal opinion, some of it cantankerous and highly personal, about sf writers and their works, about sf in general, and about SFWA.

For instance, both Ursula Le Guin and Stanislaw Lem say they don't read sf anymore, and give their reasons. Fascinating.

SF COMMENTARY is subtitled, 'the independent magazine about science fiction'. All other sf fanzines, I presume, are dependent, part of a great, controlled Voice which dictates....

Oh, not to be missed in this issue is Brian Aldiss' flensing opinion of Samuel Delany and his writing.

SFC is a fine zine; the result of years of experience, perspective and personal and mail friendships.

# NOT MELLOW

Edited and published by Chris Estey, 600 S. Kent St., G 45, Kennewick, WA 99336.

50¢ per, offset, 10 pages, letter size, mailed first class. A sloppy, sprawling, confusing personazine, kind-of, with too-small print and awful layout.

That said, please note it is also extremely interesting, honest, seeks to discuss fundamentalities, and above all contains a no-holds-barred, gutlevel interview with John Shirley which will open your eyes wide.

Order the issue with the Shirley interview. And then order the one with the Geis interview; Chris has persuaded me to Tell All. (Of course I've Told All before, but that was years ago! People forget. And so do I.)

## THE COLONISTS #1

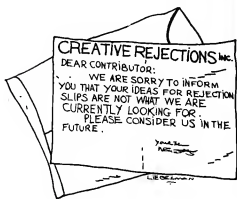
Edited and Published by Johnny Robinson. \$2.00

All correspondence to: The Colonists, 630 Marion St. NE, Salem, OR 97301 Phone: 838-5334.

Subtitled 'Realistic Magazine About the Colonization of Space', this letter-sized 32-page offset magazine features an illustrated story of pro quality about life in a variety of space colonies around Altair, and in the future. The artwork and story and optimism are by Robinson, who sketches a great outflowing of humanity to the stars. He urges support for the L-5 Society and similar efforts.

He wants contributions of realistic space colony life fiction, articles, and artwork. He wants contact with those of you of like mind.

Johnny isn't sure if he'll be at his current address very long, by the way. Those among you who would like to sell THE COLONISTS please contact Bud Plant, Inc., Box 1886, Grass Valley, CA 95945. [Plant is a distributor of small press items.]



# CYBORG BLUES

One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.  
One of my valves is missing  
and one of my brains is missing.

One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.  
One of my lips needs kissing  
and one of my brains is missing.

One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.  
One of my bladders is pissing  
and one of my brains is missing.

One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.  
One of my thats needs thising  
and one of my brains is missing.

One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.  
Most of my levels are blissing  
but one of my brains is missing.

One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.  
One of my brains is missing.

-- Neal Wilgus

## RICHARD E. GEIS

### A PERSONAL JOURNAL

- # A jaundiced commentary on current events.
- # A Libertarian viewpoint.
- # Personal counter-culture living notes.

\$3. for five issues.  
\$6. for ten issues.

Richard E. Geis  
P.O. Box 11408  
Portland, OR 97211

REG 22 nearly ready for mailing

I GET A LOT OF ART OF LARGE  
SIZE, AND ALMOST NO ART FIT  
TO FILL HOLES THIS SIZE. I  
NEED SMALL FILLOS. THEY WILL  
SAVE ME HAVING TO WRITE FILL-  
ERS LIKE THIS.

TEN YEARS AGO IN SF  
JAN-FEB-MARCH, 1971

BY ROBERT SABELLA

The Nebula nominees for 1970 were announced with the following stories garnering the most nominations: RINGWORLD (30 nominations) and AND CHAOS DIED (25) for Best Novel; "Ill Met in Lankhmar" (17) and "The Region Between" (17) for Best Novella; "Continued on Next Rock" (21) and "The Slow Sculpture" (21) for Best Novel-etc; "The Island of Dr. Death and Other Stories" (19) and "Entire and Perfect.Chrysolite" (17) for Best Short Story ... The ORBIT original anthology series received 10 of the 19 short fiction nominations ... Frank Herbert quit his newspaper job to write science fiction full-time, 5 years after the publication of DUNE! ... A Philip Wylie script entitled "LA 2017" appeared on the television show THE NAME OF THE GAME, starring Gene Barry on January 5 ... Terry Carr's original anthology UNIVERSE and Robert Silverberg's NEW DIMENSIONS both began accepting submissions for their first issues ... The April issue of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION was a special Poul Anderson issue, featuring his highly-praised novella "The Queen of Air and Darkness" ... All the Robert Lowndes-edited magazines folded, including THE MAGAZINE OF HORROR, STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES, WEIRD TERROR TALES and BIZARRE MYSTERY TALES ... Lester Del Rey married Judy-Lynn Benjamin ... Terry Carr announced he was leaving Ace Books to freelance edit. This marked the demise of the critically acclaimed Ace Science Fiction Special series ... Keith Laumer suffered a stroke from which he recovered ... Virgil Finlay died on January 18 at age 56 ... C.C. MacApp died on January 15. He was in his mid-fifties.

Mercury Press announced the folding of VENTURE after a one-year attempt to revive it as a companion magazine to F&SF ... Artists Steele Savage and John Giunta died ... Notable science fiction books published included RINGWORLD by Larry Niven and THE TOWER OF GLASS by Robert Silverberg ... GALAXY MAGAZINE completed serialization of I WILL FEAR NO EVIL by Robert Heinlein to a chorus of resounding boos by most critics ... The Winter issue of WORLDS OF FANTASY contained THE TOMBS OF ATUAN by Ursula LeGuin complete in one issue. This was later published as the middle volume of her Earthsea Trilogy which culminated in the National Book-Award-winner, THE FARTHEST SHORE.



# SHORT FICTION REVIEWS

## ANALOG

### Reviewed By Patricia Mathews

FIRST, AN APOLOGY: My last review was full of typos, errors and transpositions. I spelled Charles Aren't's name at least two different ways in the course of one review and transposed "Gribbin" to "Briggin". Bad typing and bad proofreading, and I apologize to both men.

Worse, in scolding ANALOG for straining my eyes, I referred to the editor as "Bova". That is a stupid error, totally inexcusable, for which I offer Editor Stanley Schmidt a heartfelt apology.

*Editor's Note: I owe Patricia an apology for not catching at least one of those errors---the "Bova." No excuses. The reasons I often don't read contributions closely enough is that I'm busy, lazy, and have come to trust the contributor. But even the best of us....*

The November 1980 issue of ANALOG is not an easy read. It is impossible to pick up a copy and just start reading, with pleasure, except at the L. Sprague de Camp article on biology, evolution and natural selection, which is very readable; give it to the kids if they ask about these subjects. As for the fiction:

The lead novelette is "A Greater Infinity" by Michael McCollum. Who has taken over H. Beam Piper's PARATIME lock, stock and nomenclature, with a Ben Bova-ish Cold War plot. The villains are said to be (not shown as) nasty, but the Good Side's cultural imperialism menaces the good old Euro-American sector unless the hero can come up with a talking point to save the day. Harder to plow through than Bova.

"The Sword Sleeps" by Ray Thorne must have sold on the strength of the gimmick, which involves a Polynesian volcano, an island government's

publicity stunt and an engineering rabbit out of a hat. The point is obscured by irrelevancies and the hero (referred to as Don, but called Yank -- an example of this story's gratuitous confusion) being childish all over the place. A little more facility in tale-telling and it might have amused a few of the readers.

Best of the shorts is Ted Reynolds' "Meeting of the Minds". How do you question a baby about a disaster that happened before he was born, and at what cost? An interstellar massacre hangs on the answer.

"The Bully and the Crazy Boy" by Marc Steigler pits conquering felinoids against the human capacity for hara-kiri when backed against the wall and depends on whether or not you accept the basic premise. The hero was recently the guest villain on Dick Tracy where he went by the name of Breakdown.

"Velvet Rose of Evening" by William Tuning again hangs on the reader accepting the basic premise: that a dying scientist would make a discovery and then give credit to a has-been father he's resented for years. It can be made plausible; Tuning hasn't done it.

Last and least is "Testing" by Laurence M. Janifer. Premise: that a wise elder race is waiting for the rational people -- those who answer opinion polls with "Don't Know" to dominate on Earth -- completely failing to notice that one has been elected President of the United States recently. At least Gerald Knave stays well in the background this time.

There is also a very good letter to the editor, name withheld, about equality of opportunity as practiced in this culture.

After November's drought, the December issue was more than welcome. Skipping the serial as always, I read straight through two editorials, a jest taking Asimov's name in vain, and all the rest of the magazine, stopping only for practical necessities.

The best story is Timothy Zahn's "A Lingering Death", a tidy treatment of spacegoing Earthlings and a planetbound but long-lived race willing at long last to trade secrets. But -- what's the catch?

"Grain of Truth" by Charles Spano, Jr. is a series of letters between a total stuffed shirt at the Klaus Primate Research Center and his sister Virginia about a recreated race of prehistoric arctic humanoids: the names telegraph the punch, but isn't this the December issue, after all? Amusing.

"Gift" by Michael McCollum concerns a benevolent alien with a cheap source of solar power to sell; again, where's the catch? But I keep thinking of the optimism of Heinlein's "Let There Be Light". The form, bartender tells what customer told him, is a little awkward.

Mac Reynolds always makes the reader plow through pages of Reynoldsonian economics; in "The Union Forever" the lectures come before, after and during every incident. Other



than that, it starts out ostensibly as a tale of an idle young man who finds a worthwhile purpose, reluctantly, after being drafted -- and then pulls the old switcheroo. Very nice if you have a gift for skipping or like Reynolds on economics.

Now the bad news, for I used to like Lee Correy. However, his serial, *SHUTTLE DOWN*, which started out as a reasonably decent sort of off-we-go adventure, soon degenerated into whining, backbiting and an incredible view of human relations all separated by masses of "Roger-AOK" high-tech-talk.

Whining? I've heard the endless griping about the way those wicked ol' welfare programs are ruining our spaceships; nary a word about the ultraconservative Watchdog of the Treasury types (like the Representative from New Mexico) and I'm sick of it. I'm a space freak and I voted Libertarian -- but.

Backbiting? The hero's deadhead boss is "A retired jet jockey, over-age to make shuttle pilot". The Chief Astronaut thanks you, sir. The description is dead-on except for the skull contents.

Incredible? I quote: "(Jackie Hart, mission specialist, backing for pilot) never would or never could make the grade through utilization of feminine wiles". As if doing so were somehow the norm! As for her efforts to allay the suspicions thereof, "She was ... almost a female caricature of a man". And that, sisters, is Catch-22. Damned if you do and damned if you don't; follow the lead character's dealings with Jackie, Pepto-Bismol in hand. It gets worse, I assure you.

Sorry, Lee. I loved *ROCKET MAN* in my college days.

There are no bad stories in the January 5, 1980 issue of *ANALOG*, not even Lee Correy's serial "Shuttle Down". The high-tech talk is at a minimum and the dilemma of the astronauts, who must move their craft off Easter Island and must deal with a Latin American government and Polynesian culture meanwhile, is nicely told. It is still supremely irritating in spots: does Correy really believe that a total jerk like reporter Alice Arnold would be hired by any network in the country unless she had some redeeming qualities? And I hope he resolves the nasty, demeaning power struggle between Shuttle Commander Frank King and Mission Specialist Jackie Hart or at least shuts them both up when third parties -- foreign ones at that -- are around.

Now the good news: Christopher Columbus meets modern management directives in Al Charnitz' "Sailing Through Program Management". (The artist drew Chris as 18th, not 15th Century; oh, well.) I laughed myself sick; a victim of the "Matrix Management" directive locally was Not Amused. Too painful.

"Green Winter" by F. Paul Wilson, shows a hunter of a mutant race torn between his beliefs and his heretic daughter's proof that the "hairies" he hunts are sapient. Old theme, nice treatment.

"Heroic Measures" by Edward Welton raises a man from the dead to execute him for a crime he now has no memory of. Is this justice?

Charles V. de Vet's "Expendable" is a secret agent whose identity is transferred to the bodies of executed criminals for his various missions. Surely a people with that capacity would use it for more than "Spy Vs. Spy".



"Emergence" by David R. Palmer, is billed as an end-of-the-world novelette. It is also a very good Gifted Child (New race variety, superior endowments, etc.) story and should either be pared down to that or expanded into a novel.

The conflict between the parents of Candy Smith-Foster on how to rear a gifted daughter was beautiful, and again, painful. The government's reaction to these kids (a triple-blind education program) was straight out of next year's Gifted Child Quarterly.

Unfortunately, Candy sounded, not like a kid, but like Robert Heinlein. I would believe 18, but never 11, no matter how precocious; the personality was wrong. Remember that, sir, when you start your novel, and send me a copy.

I liked the index at the back of the magazine and the non-fiction was good.

## F&SF

### Reviewed By

### Russell Engbretson

The November of *F&SF* features a novella by Harlan Ellison, *ALL THE LIES THAT ARE MY LIFE*. It is also included in Ellison's new collection of stories, *SHATTERDAY*, which was reviewed in the last issue of *SF REVIEW*. For that reason I won't review it here, except to say it is an interesting and offbeat story.

"Lord of the Dance" by Gary Kilworth is a supernatural story about an antique collector who is almost collected himself by a sinister group of immortals. The author conjures up a menacingly dark atmosphere in the setting of an English village, and does a commendable job of creating a rounded main character. The story even has a credible upbeat ending, in contrast to most of the horror stories in these last three issues.

William S. Doxey, whose style is a bit reminiscent of Cordwainer Smith, has written a sly story of future intrigue entitled "Rheeman's Space". It begins slowly and builds to an ironic climax as Rheeman, a secret police agent equipped with all kinds of whimsical James Bond paraphernalia, attempts to apprehend an armed robber.

Thomas Sullivan's "The Rague", concerns the rape and impregnation of an astronaut by her fellow astronaut, or so it seems. Her partner insists he is innocent. The problem here is that the story is written in a straightforward and gripping manner, but is resolved with nebulous symbolism.

"-- An Unfortunate Incident in the Life of a License Examiner" by R.M. Lanning is a relentlessly grim portrait of future overpopulation. Couples must be licensed to have

children and the method of licensing is an interview between the examiner and prospective mother. Because child-bearing is discouraged, the seemingly bland interview is a tricky verbal obstacle course designed to disqualify the applicant. "An Unfortunate Incident ..." is about bureaucratic corruption, personal compromise and love, among other things. Pathos and irony are juggled with remarkable deftness in this thoroughly depressing and fine story.

The December issue is a mixed bag of stories ranging from competent-ly uninspired to excellent (with one truly bad contribution).

"Melpomene, Calliope ... and Fred" by Nicholas Yemakoy is a humorous fantasy about a writer with writer's block who procures the services of a Muse by the name of Fred, Muse of hebephrenia and dissociation. A silly story, perhaps, but I grinned all the way through it.

Barry N. Malzberg writes "The Twentieth Century Murder Case" in his usual monochromatic, gently intense style. It is a tale, literally, of the murder of the Twentieth Century and the efforts to track down the culprit.

"Uncle John and the Saviour" by John Kessel is a story of personal revelation. Jesus of Indianapolis, an android, comes to the town of Greenhill to deliver a sermon. His logic circuits are scrambled by the questions and replies of Uncle John, the story's non-believer protagonist. Before He expires, however, He delivers a spontaneous, non-programmed reply to Uncle John. This is a very good and somewhat opaque story that requires careful reading.

"Neander-Tale" by James Hogan is a cutesy polemic in favor of nuclear power. It seems this Neanderthal has discovered fire and his fellow cavemen are up in arms over this dangerous and new-fangled invention and ... well, I'm sure you can take it from there.

"The Tents of Kedar" by Robert F. Young is a well-written story of racism and its self-destructive consequences; however, the *deus ex machina* that holds the plot together is very creaky. Otherwise, a good story.

Lisa Tuttle's "The Other Mother" is a haunting study of the relationship between a single mother and her children, clothed in the vestments of a horror story. The scenes between the main character, Sara, and her children, Michael and Melanie, will ring true to the ear of any parent.

Another horror story, this one

with a science fictional basis, is "The Autopsy" by Michael Shea. The only other thing I've read by Shea is his 1974 novel, *A QUEST FOR SIMBILIS*, a continuation of the adventures of Jack Vance's *Oglet*, the Clev-er character. Shea did a remarkable job of imitating Vance. "The Autopsy" retains some of the convoluted syntax of his novel, but the style and subject matter are the author's own. I don't think I have ever read a more gruesome story; several pages are devoted to a graphic and medically exact description of an autopsy. Harrowing enough in itself, that is only a prelude to the inventive, obscene creation Michael Shea springs on us later. A strong argument against intellect overshadowing emotion and triumph of the human spirit are the main themes of "The Autopsy". An excellent story -- not for the faint-of-heart or weak-of-stomach.

I'm running short of space and have already dropped several stories reviewed. So, although the January issue contains quite a few good stories, I'll have to skip over most of them.

"Batteries Not Included" by Ron Goulart is a murder mystery set in the year 2010 in Greater Los Angeles. Despite the bantering tone, there is a serious theme similar to that in *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*.

"Rosko Gate" by Coleman Brax is a quietly understated tale of communication between a human boy and a young extraterrestrial. It's a refreshing change from the more commonly melodramatic alien encounter story.

Mildred Downey Broxton's "Walk the Ice" is also about an alien contact, and a very strange one. The humans are Eskimos and have no idea the creature they have befriended is not human. Most of the story is an accurate description of Eskimo culture that makes the early American pioneers look like suburbanites.

George Alec Effinger's best writing is found in his short fiction, as a reading of "Breakaway" confirms. It is another of his sports stories, this time ice hockey played on a three-mile-long icefield on a planet whose temperature is close to absolute zero. The protagonist, Václav Zajac, is an archetypal loner who pays a high price for his solitude. The scientific extrapolation is fascinating, yet Effinger keeps the story's focus on the main character and his obsessions. A very enjoyable story.

## OMNI Reviewed By Margana B. Rolain

October, 1980

"Prairie Sun" by Edward Bryant  
"Rautavaara's Case" by Philip K. Dick  
"Easy Points" by Kathleen V. Westfall

November

"Prime Time" by Norman Spinrad

December

"The Hunting of Hewlisch" by Sam Nicholson  
"St. Amy's Tale" by Orson Scott Card

"Prairie Sun" is a descriptively written story about trophy hunters from the future, told them from the viewpoint of Micah Taverner, the boy of the past that they plunder. The story captures the feel of pioneer life on the trail west: the hard-ship, a little of the desperation. Micah's little sister is critically ill with smallpox when he meets up with the two strangers from the future and one of them tells the hard-ship-matured thirteen-year-old boy more about themselves than he should. The ending is the superb part, and I won't spoil the story by revealing it.

"Rautavaara's Case" is a nightmarish tale of a human brain being artificially revived after death through alien intervention and the interpretation of the worship of Christ by those same aliens according to their own attitudes. Some readers, myself included, would find that this story takes an effort of persistence to finish.

"Easy Points" is an entertaining satire on bureaucratic inefficiency. Henry Cutter, government "middle manager", has invented "The Game", which is guaranteed to provide his fellow government employees with obsessive fun but the public with varying degrees of frustration. The rules are outlined in the story as the reader rides along with Henry.

In Norman Spinrad's "Prime Time" television programming is a way of life -- literally. Senior citizens, for presumably a fortune, can retire to "Total Television Heaven", a place where customers are awarded their own private tanks of plugged-in, electronic, taped-fantasies bliss. John and Edna, once married to each other, show us two ways to adjust -- or to go crazy.

In the December issue, the undisputable gem is "St. Amy's Tale" by Orson Scott Card. This prose spell begins:

"Mother could kill with her hands. Father could fly. These are miracles."

"St. Amy's Tale" is not your typical post-holocaust story at all, because it is at once: an allegory, the recounting of a personal tragedy and a conflict between two kinds of realities within the story. There is no satisfactory way to describe it, and it is well worth more than one reading.

"The Hunting of Hewlish" in the same issue is indeed a satire as described by OMNI editors, but it's hard to decide what exactly that it is a satire of, beyond the obvious one on the myth of the female hunter of men. Sibyl and Roxanne are twin sister sirens, known as "huntsresses" who maintain their luxurious life by preying on suitable human males. However, their boredom has at last gotten the better of them and they decide to hunt sailors. Their opposite temperaments lead them to pursue their prey in different fashions but with the same predictable results: the huntsresses themselves are snared.

The January issue of OMNI was unavailable for review.

## SMALL PRESS MAGAZINES *Reviewed By* **Darrell Schweitzer**

Let me begin with a word of explanation. One of the basic facts of the writing life is that if a story is any good, it will sell somewhere professionally. This is why experienced fanzine readers don't read the fiction in fanzines.

Ah, but what if there aren't enough markets? Another matter entirely. The magazines I will be reviewing in this column are non-newsstand publications which feature fiction of professional quality. (The difference is that if you read the story as a critical exercise, to understand what's wrong with it, or because the author shows promise and you want to encourage him, that's amateur. If you read it for enjoyment of its merits, that's professional.) In theory, if there were

adequate newsstand markets, none of the good stories would be published in the small magazines, because the big ones offer more money and better exposure. However, as interest in horror and fantasy fiction expanded far faster than the markets in the late 60s and early 70s, small magazines popped overnight like toadstools. Some of them vanished as fast. Some of the early pioneers (WHISPERS and WEIRBOOK) are still with us.

Not all are oriented along the WEIRD TALES/UNKNOWN axis, of course, but science fiction small press magazines have never been as successful because they've always had serious competition from the professionals. No one has yet found an area of specialty that doesn't, although I think it would be possible to do so with what we used to call "new wave" or "experimental" SF, since that doesn't seem to be a commercial proposition anymore. NEW WORLDS could probably do it, though the newest incarnation has published very little fiction as yet.

Two ground rules: I intend mostly to discuss what is worthwhile in the small mags. I don't see the point of dragging out something you wouldn't see without searching for it and then telling you it wasn't worth your trouble. Also, I would like to skip reprints.

Both of these rules will be broken as I please. Otherwise, for instance, I wouldn't have much to say about the 6th issue of FANTASY TALES which is certainly the most successful small press magazine in Britain. The cover story, "Ever the Faith Endures" by Manly Wade Wellman, appeared as an original in THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES. It's fairly good Wellman, which means a strong background, but a plot that aborts as soon as the Legendary Thing has been paraded on stage once. "Dreams May Come" by H. Warner Munn is a reprint from UNICORN, an adequate twists-of-fate tale. My own, "The Story of the Brown Man" is a reprint from FANTASY/CROSSWINDS, which had a circulation of 200 and sold out in two weeks, and if it were written by someone else I might say more. This leaves us with "The Elements" by Frances Garfield, which is too cute for my taste, "The Last Trick" by Dave Reeder, which is one-fright horror (similar to one-punch science fiction), and "The Lair of the White Wolf" by J.R. Schifino, which I do not like at all. Schifino has his fans. His hero Lupus Lupolius is building up a following. (Another quirk of the small press field is that it is possible for a writer to develop a reputation there and even become quite popular without ever

dipping into the Big Pond. This sort of insularity is not good.) However, the stories strike me as nothing but gratuitous sex and violence, and I've had enough of them.

All of which leaves me in the odd position of trying to assure you that FANTASY TALES usually has more new fiction than this and it's usually better. And of all the stories included, only the Schifino is really bad. There was a nifty vampire tale by Randall Garrett in the previous issue. An original Kane epic by Karl Edward Wagner will appear in the next one. So don't write this off, okay?

Also keep an eye on NIGHT VOYAGES which will be featuring more fiction in the future. The current (6th) issue contains only one story, actually a prologue to Charles Saunders' "Inaro" novel. Saunders is another who has built up quite a reputation in the small markets. He's also a far better writer than Schifino.

Another one-story magazine is THE ANTHOLOGY OF SPECULATIVE POETRY, #4, which is mostly what it sounds like, but to celebrate the presence of an R.A. Lafferty interview and some poems, there is also a short story, "Phoenic", which is a delightful snippet of Lafferty-esque weirdness, which has both a homey and a mythic quality about it. Buy the magazine. It should be a collector's item. (The verse is by the likes of Michael Bishop, Tom Disch, Joan Vinge, Warner Munn, Fritz Leiber, Jack Dann, etc.)

To get back to rules and generalizations: the aforementioned if-it-sells-any-good-it'll-sell syndrome also occurs in the small press. There are a few exceptions, but not too many. (One is ELDRITCH TALES. Stories from there have been included in THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR. ELDRITCH pays in copies.) My observation is that if the payment goes below 1/2¢ a word, the quality drops off sharply. Even at 1/2¢ one teeters on the brink of amateur stumblebumity. (Is that a word? It is now.) I find DARK FANTASY #22 teetering. "The Flat on Rue Chambord" by Galad Elflandson (who apparently got his start here and is yet another who has built up a considerable following, etc.) is quite competently written, and even has an arresting premise (Disgusting hunchback in a foul slum has an inexplicably beautiful wife and, behind all the clutter, an absolutely palatial flat that he rents out cheap. Why?) but when the end pulls a Hastur-out-of-a-hat trick, the original promise is lost among the Nameless Horrors. (I also wonder why characters ride carriages in 1920 or thereabouts, but never mind.) The other two stories in the issue have, with varying degrees of competence, run-

over-by-a-truck endings. It does not strike me as particularly effective to introduce a character, strut him around a bit, then kill him off pointlessly.

Much more to my taste is the fiction in *GOTHIC #3*, which is a magazine devoted to the 18th and 19th Century tradition (rigidly but rather vaguely defined by the editor) of Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe and that crowd. "The Voice of Blood" by Jean Muno is a strong, almost-vampire tale, definitely not for the squeamish. "The Narrow House" by Phillip C. Heath is simply superb, one of the best Victorian pastiches I've seen in a long time. It definitely has the feel of the period, the style of the period, without the verbosity most people expect of the period. An accomplishment, that. Also a strong horror plot, embodying the basic element of horror fiction as defined by Lovecraft: the discovery that one's whole conceptual foundation for existence is wrong and rapidly coming apart. Lee Weinstein's "The Lady in Darkness" does a much better job of pastiching *THE KING IN YELLOW* than Eiflandson did (above), and it is what I would call a distinct oddity. There's no denying that it has effective moments of atmosphere, that it is well-written, but the premise is so silly that one is reminded of the old claim that Gothic is really a form of parody. You see, instead of Nameless Things, the horror which drives folks mad when they read about it in *Forbidden Books* is, ah... Feminism, a cult called Sisters of Purity:

'...Following the legal reforms, and social and governmental reorganization of the turbulent seventies and eighties, homosexuality had lost its stigma and the old feminist and gay movements had largely subsided. However, some of the more radical feminist groups had remained in small pockets, ready to bolster the Sisters movement when it hit our shores. It rapidly spread from city to city and state to state like a contagion, infecting woman after woman... (p. 14)'

That's the 1980s, by the way. Like *THE KING IN YELLOW* this is set a few years in the future. So we have a Victorian horror story about feminism ("You insidious disease! You foul mocker of men!" quoth the hero at one point) set in our future, which, if one doesn't get overly offended, is definitely an *Anomaly* and *Curiosity* of Literature.

*DRAGONFIELDS #3* (actually the first under this title, it being a combination of two earlier magazines, *DRAGONBANE* and *BEYOND THE FIELDS WE*

*KNOW*) is a handsome production, with a surprising amount of good poetry (not something one normally sees in these magazines), some interesting articles and one story that really grabbed me: "Cyron in Wax" by Tanti Lee. On the surface it's standard wizard-killing in a standard setting, but the interesting part is what drives her hero: he seeks danger, even pain needlessly it seems, because he is completely bored with life and after sensation. So he may well be the most decadent fantasy hero ever (next to whom Elric is a Boy Scout) or else...? This is one of the few cases where the unsolved riddle of a character's motivations keeps the story going. "Devil on my Stomach" by Andrew Offutt and Richard Lyon has a less interesting character, but some very nasty magic.



"Keeper of the Wood" by Caradoc Cador is one of those stories that almost works because it is almost beautiful: almost. I could have used less synopsis, more scenes and drama. Cador is trying to do a legend in the manner of *Dunsany*, and not quite succeeding. All the other stories are at least readable. You can't expect magazines like this to publish nothing but great stories. They are the workaday fantasy markets, in which the average appears. To find the great, you pick and choose.

Which I will do more next time. These magazines tend to be so infrequent the ones left over will probably still be current.

And now a word about *ETERNITY*, #2. This is a science fiction magazine. All of what I said about science fiction not making it in small press doesn't quite apply, because this is a definite attempt to go professional from a small base as *GALILEO* did. (And I hope the editor has enough sense not to commit suicide on

the newstands as *GALILEO* did.) It pays as much as *AMAZING* (and faster, though I should mention that it is overstocked at the moment) and attracts professional writers. There are good columns by Andrew Offutt, Mark Pflough and Ed Bryant. A rotating "Writing SP" column was written by me last time, by Roger Zelazny this time. I interview Greg Benford this time. The fiction is on the same level as that found in the newstand magazines, which means I'm not that thrilled with all of it, but consider it mostly competent. Three stories I commend to you: "Undermuck With Quill Tripstickler" by John Shirley for its bizarre alien environment, "A Simple Twist of Fate" by Grant Carrington for good characterization in a short space, and "Flawless Scale, Perfect Meter" by Benton McAdams for an intense portrait of a man driven to destruction in the quest of artistic perfection ("the perfect sound", sort of a Unified Field Theory of music). McAdams is a new writer. His first story appeared last issue. He is sometimes weak on detail, but his stories have life.

Also alive, in a cruel, ghastly way, is Stephen Leigh's "And Speak of Soft Defiance", which is about intrigue in an imaginary royal court. Fantasy, I guess, though there is no fantastic element. It's a reprint from the old series *ETERNITY*, which ran 1972-75 if I remember right.

Addresses and per copy prices. (Remember that small magazines tend to be overpriced. This is no less true in the mainstream, where *PARIS REVIEW* will cost you \$3.50 and *KENYON REVIEW* \$5.00. It's economics scale working against you.)

**FANTASY TALES**, Stephen Jones, 33 Wren House, Tachbrook Estate, London SW1V 3QD, England. 78p or \$3.00 by direct post. Cheaper if you get it from a dealer. Fantasy Centre always stocks it.

**NIGHT VOYAGES**, Gerald Brown, P.O. Box 175, Freeburg, IL, 62243, \$2.50.

**THE ANTHOLOGY OF SPECULATIVE POETRY**, Robert Frazier, Box 491, Nantucket Island, MA, 02554, \$1.75.

**DARK FANTASY**, Shadow Press, Box 207, Gnanocoe, Ontario K7G 2T7, Canada, \$1.00.

**GOTHIC**, Gothic Press, 4998 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, LA, 70808, \$3.25.

**ETERNITY**, Stephen Gregg, P.O. Box 510, Clemson, SC, 29631, \$1.75.

# ASIMOV'S

## Reviewed By

### Robert Sabella

Editors of science fiction magazines are basically insecure about their readership. They feel the traditional pulp urge to hook the reader right away before they lose interest in the magazine. Thus, nearly every issue begins with the feature story, the attention-getter, in hopes of hooking those casual readers (that is, anybody without a subscription) and then gradually fades away in a morass of mediocre stories and articles.

George Scithers seems immune to this insecurity since ASIMOV'S is formatted more like an original anthology than any other magazine. Each issue begins with a book review column (surely as far from an attention-getter as is possible) which is then followed by a mixed bag of short fiction and articles, finally concludes with the feature story, usually a long novelet by a name author. Apparently Scithers feels confident that his bread-and-butter stories will keep his readers' interest enough for them to read as far as the issue's centerpiece which will then leave such a favorable impression the reader will eagerly await the next issue.

The ultimate test of ASIMOV'S policy is how it affects the sales. It is unlikely Davis Publications has done any comprehensive market surveys although we can safely assume Scithers' policy is not hurting sales since ASIMOV'S currently leads all the traditional science fiction magazines. The only test we can make here is whether the concluding novelets are good enough to leave the desired favorable impression. After all, if the stories are failures, where is the benefit of highlighting the worst stories?

"Peregrine: Perplexed", by Avram Davidson (Oct.), is a delightful although somewhat eccentric fantasy set in Davidson's whacky vision of the late Roman Empire. Authority is fragmented into Eastern, Western and Middle Empires; Goths and Vandals are at the gates of Rome; so many religions abound -- all legitimized -- it is hard to tell the churches apart without a scorecard. Much as I enjoyed reading this story I cannot promise the same to everybody. Davidson's style can best be called



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chemicals!

rambling -- and at times it is outright distracting -- although it does create the feel of the medieval setting wonderfully. And the plot -- well, again, rambling is the most appropriate word. There's a pagan/religious ceremony conducted by two drunken ministers, a kleptomaniac dragon, a long chase through the countryside and somehow it all manages to come together at the end although, truthfully, by then it barely matters. The parts are definitely better than the whole but it's all good fun and a reminder that Avram Davidson remains one of the most original thinkers in science fiction or fantasy.

On the surface "Catch the Sun" by Barry Longyear (Nov.), seems a fairly competent story about an exploratory team terraforming a planet which rotates so slowly on its axis there is a constantly moving habitable strip bordered by unbearable desert on one side and freezing ice on the other. The problem is that spreading the planet's rotation, while it would create ideal farming conditions, would totally destroy the primitive inhabitants' lifestyle which is intertwined with their religion. The story's main concern is not the technology but the relationship between three humans and the primitive aliens. While its concern is laudable the story fails primarily because the motivations are both simplistic and unconvincing. The story's conclusion follows directly from that motivation and raises doubts more than it satisfies. My advice is to read the story lightly without asking too many questions -- since none of them will be answered anyway -- and you might find it an adequate time-passer.

"Companioning", by Jo Clayton (Dec.) is a basically likeable story

that has a fantasy tone but is actually pure science fiction. The plot is simple: Gleia is not sure if she loves Shounach enough to remain with him on his quixotic quest for revenge or if she would rather accompany Deel, a carefree female dancer. When both Gleia and Shounach are captured by a despotic ruler contemplation takes a backseat to anger and fast-paced action. Conclusions are reached somewhat simplistically -- both the emotional trauma Gleia is undergoing and their attempt to escape the despot -- but not so contrived as to be unbelievable. My one gripe is that the story reads like part of a larger tapestry which makes for occasional confusion. Still I would not mind reading the rest of the series, if indeed it does exist.

A conclusion on the three stories' impact? Both Davidson's and Clayton's should interest many, although not all readers into returning next issue. Considering the overall batting average of science fiction magazines, two out of three ain't bad.

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Two other stories deserve mention.

"Laughing Man" by Sydney Van Scyoc (Nov.), was a pastoral story reminiscent of Edgar Pangborn. It was about the naive hopefulness of youth versus the unquestioning devotion to tradition of adults, surely a well-used and frequently abused topic. The ending was unexpected and although the unanswered questions are naggingly annoying, it was refreshing that neither hopefulness nor tradition got their comeuppance.

John M. Ford is one of ASIMOV'S stable of writers who seems to appear at least once per issue. Until now everything I've read by him seemed basically shallow with no real purpose except to fill pages. That changed with "Slowly By, Lorena" (Nov.), a quantum leap for Ford. A modern doctor vacations in a parallel world experiencing its version of the American Civil War. Through a freak accident he is unable to return home and for five years experiences the trauma of warfare and the woefully inadequate medical practices which kill more soldiers than the actual fighting. With his advanced knowledge he is able to make small improvements and save lives that otherwise would have been lost. He anticipates the war's end when he can make an even bigger difference in the advancement of medicine. Then he gets a chance to go home and must choose between making that difference and returning to his safe, sensible life. A genuinely moving, thoughtful story.



# MY TWO CENTS' WORTH



ANY EGGS I FIX  
ARE DEVILED.



BY F.M. BUSBY

Re the Priest/Williamson/Pournelle/Chalker discussion of SFNA, a few sidelights. Anything that can be said of the merits/demerits of the Nebula Awards can be said of nearly any awards system in any creative field of endeavor, whether awarded by fans, peers or some sort of blue-ribbon jury. All such systems have faults and always will; attempts to improve matters are laudable and sometimes help. To speak of abolishment is, I think, fruitless in this case; the Nebula Awards are specified in the By-laws of SFNA, which may be changed only by "a majority of those voting, that majority to consist of not less than 25% of the active membership". Regardless of the merits of Chris Priest's case (and he's not alone, surely), I simply doubt that the membership will ever vote to abolish the Awards. So we may as well buckle down to trying to improve the selection system. Personally I think the current rules, while not perfect (what is?), are designed to operate as fairly as possible at this point. With one exception which I'll note in a moment.

In Jerry Pournelle's otherwise excellent presentation, he errs by saying that U.S. publication is required for SFNA membership; the By-laws specify no such thing. In fact, not even English-language publication is required. I think the non-existent restriction is one that many of us usually take for granted because very seldom do we bother to look things up. The Nebula Rules, though, do require (and this is the above-mentioned exception to fairness) U.S. publication. It's reasonable, in a way; most SFNA members read no language but English, and items published in Britain but not in the U.S. aren't likely to be seen by enough members to give such works a decent shot at getting on the final ballot, let alone winning. But -- in the interests of fairness, why not remove the U.S.-publication requirement and let anyone (who wishes

to do so) take his or her own chances? Since the writer has the option of pulling a given edition from consideration in favor of a later one, I don't see how anyone could get hurt.

Jerry gives very good coverage of the Lem matter, but misses on a fact or two. If it's true that "it was elsewhere established that honorary members do not pay dues", that fact was not known to the officers at the time the Lem Situation arose, including the Treasurer who was also Membership Chairman (per the By-laws), who made the decision re Lem. And one other item here; after the honorary membership was revoked, President Fred Pohl wrote to Lem, apologized for the confusion and officially (and cordially) invited Lem to take up the active membership for which he was qualified, and, in case Lem had any problems getting money sent from Poland to the U.S., Fred offered to stand good for Lem's dues. And Lem did answer; maybe Jerry did not see a copy, or has forgotten, but Lem expressed appreciative thanks to Fred Pohl while politely declining to take up the offer.

Regardless of a glitch or two, though, Jerry did make the point that inviting a person to take the appropriate grade of membership (and as noted here, offering to subsidize him) rather than a grade to which he's not been entitled in the first place, is hardly an attempt to (in Chris Priest's words) "suppress freedom of speech". I mean, is it?

I'm not denying that when fun-loving Ted Cogswell ("Brigadier General, U.S. Podiatric Corps, Retired") ran the Lem diatribe\* on the cover of the SFNA FORUM, some few came on with a touch of lynch-mob mentality. What I'm saying is, it didn't prevail.

\*(which was not in Lem's own words, but hyped-up for extra feistiness by an East German translator -- a fact not known to most of us until much later.)

Jack Chalker makes a good point, that SFNA (for reasons of sheer logistics) can't function well on behalf of writers in other countries. He suggests a good answer: formation of similar groups in those other countries, and liaison between all of them, including SFNA. That method could work. SFNA trying to Big-brother, worldwide, wouldn't work at all.

I think Jack misread Chris Priest's line "suppress freedom of speech" to mean officer-censorship of the SFNA FORUM, and then came up defending something that, to my knowledge, never happened. "... the censoring officer was not immediately past ..." Well, in the only FORUM hassle I know about, that could even remotely fit the description, the (appointed, or more accurately, volunteer) editor was doing the censoring. Not to take up old cold beefs with my friend Ted Cogswell, but for a time he inadvertently offended a segment of the membership and would not print their protests, feeling that "the kook fringe" didn't deserve a hearing. Well, as Veep I was then the "Complaint Desk" for Pres Fred Pohl; I got the complaints and decided they needed some action. So I leaned on Ted much more than I would have liked to do, to the effect that either he gave his dissenters a fair break of (being also in charge of Publications) I would direct the Treasurer to withdraw SFNA financial support from the FORUM. This fiat is in print, in the FORUM, by the way. Well, Ted and I got bugged with each other for a while, but we got over it fairly soon. I think, though, that Jack's paragraph (SFR #37), bottom of page 23) is intended to refer to Andy Offutt as the officer-censor in the case. Which was not the case; I dunnit, but as anti-censor. Andy gave me moral support, though, and when he was elected Pres, Ted figured Andy would lean harder (I guess) and Ted resigned as FORUM Editor (I miss his zany antics!).

That's all I have, for now. I hope it'll clarify a thing or two.

# LETTERS

# CARD FROM HARLAN ELLISON  
3484 Coy Drive  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423  
November 7, 1980

'Good for you, publishing the "Inside the Whale" responses of Williamson, Pournelle and Chalker to Mr. Priest's comments re SFWA in SFR #36.

'As almost everyone knows, I've been out of SFWA for quite a while -- and intend to keep it that way -- and my leavetaking was for what I continue to feel were good and sufficient reasons. So I am hardly an apologist for the organization.

'Yet, Priest's position was clearly wrong and cast aspersions on SFWA that were not deserved. Mr. Lem (both in his own voice and through the voice of the mischievous Franz Rottensteiner) continues to sow seeds of dissension and he was treated far more equitably than he deserved by SFWA. It's a shame Priest doesn't know that.'

# CARD FROM MICHAEL MORDOCK  
7 November, 1980

'Thanks for the latest SFR which I enjoyed. Re "Inside the Whale"---I didn't know Chris Priest had left SFWA. I left it a while ago---the decision being triggered by the Lem stuff. I think Lem is a boring old fart, insular and narrow-minded. I also think that of Anderson, Pournelle, etc. Pournelle's letter reflects the provincialism of most of the membership and that's why I prefer to stay out of SFWA. I remain a member of the Writers Guild here, Society of Authors, and Authors Guild there. None of these organizations are as claustrophobic as SFWA. Incidentally, almost all UK SFWA members became members of Writers Guild a couple of years ago.'

((I, too, think Lem an arrogant, pretentious, overpraised writer whose opinions on non-socialist sf and fantasy are tainted and warped by envy, ignorance and misunderstanding. Further, I think this contempt he manifests is based on and springs from weakness, not strength, of intellect, talent, culture, manners, morals, and politics. In short, I think he's a literary fraud and yet I pity him, for I fear that when Russia invades Poland and "cleans house" of "revisionists," etc., he may be one of the casualties.))

# CARD FROM ROBERT A BLOCH  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
November 5, 1980

'By golly (as Harlan would say), heret is, the day after election and I can hardly wait for your comments. Meantime, however, the current issue of SFR more than suffices. Just saw your "Vivisector" in Baltimore at the World Fantasy Convention -- where I asked a pretty formidable cross-section of hyphen-SF fantasy-SF writers what they thought of the Nebula Awards. Most, with a furtive glance around and a plea to DNQ, averred that they were dismayed by the status of said same. Your thoughtful pieces by the three SFWA officers certainly offer no spirited defense -- only an apologia.

'As for Stanislaw Lem, I'm happy to have been among the first to take a public stand -- in print -- against his membership, his opinions and then-available translations of his "masterpieces".

'Speaking of masterpieces -- your cover is a delight. I love the wig and horns on Nixon, though I think the Judy Murrell figure is a trifle exaggerated. Hoping you are the same.'

((I, unfortunately, am the same: with a figure a trifle exaggerated---by 20 pounds. Around the waist.))

# LETTER FROM JACK WILLIAMSON  
Box 761, Portales, NM 88130  
November 2, 1980

'I was glad to see the letters on "Inside the Whale" by Jerry Pournelle and Jack Chalker in SFR #37. About freedom in the SFWA FORUM: although I appreciate Jack Chalker's comment that maybe I didn't know the lid was on, I think I should say that I did encourage the FORUM editors to edit letters from members. I felt, and still feel, that there were three sorts of material we should not print:

1.) Letters of no use or interest to SFWA or its members. Printing it was costing us about ten bucks a page and there are sorts of letters that I thought the membership should not be asked to subsidize.

2.) Letters that looked to be libel. At that time, we were not incorporated. Officers were clearly subject to suit for damage. Some of our members were at times intemper-



ate, and I didn't want to go to court for matters that didn't concern me.

3.) Letters written in language offensive to many of our members. As an Army veteran and a student of linguistics, I try myself to keep an open mind to dialectic variation. But we did print one letter, well enough intended, so phrased that it caused one respected member to resign in indignation and several officers and former officers to address their indignation to us. Although the FORUM is officially confidential, it is in fact widely read, and I didn't and still don't see any reason for permitting language in it that offends a good part of our membership and would certainly offend a large part of the public at large.

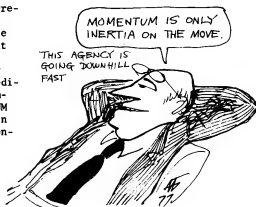
'The only charge of censorship that I recall came from a member who was unhappy with the settlement with Ace Books -- a settlement worked out by Jerry Pournelle and generally received with gratitude by other members; it resulted, I believe, in total payments of about a quarter million in back royalties which the previous owners of Ace had failed to pay. I felt the publication of the letters this member wanted to print would in itself have been a violation of our agreement with the new owners of Ace, and I advised the editor not to print them. The circumstances were described in the FORUM and I understand that the member in question did receive a probably generous settlement of his claims against Ace.'

# LETTER FROM CHRISTOPHER PRIEST  
1 Ortygia House, 6 Lower Road  
Harrow, Middlesex HA2 0DA  
England  
5 November 1980

'I suppose the responses from Jerry Pournelle and Jack Chalker (to my SFWA article) were fairly predictable. And I'm fairly predictable in that for the most part I continue to disagree with them. But a couple of matters of fact have emerged from Mr. Pournelle's letter.

'Firstly, he goes to some pains to explain that overseas members are a financial burden on SFWA. I didn't mention any of this in my article, because it wasn't pertinent to the argument, but in the early 1970s I became SFWA's European Agent. The idea cooked up between myself and James Gunn, was (a) to save SFWA money and (b) to speed SFWA publications and ballot-forms to European members, the material would be airmailed in

one parcel to me, then redistributed locally. There was a real saving in expense by doing this. Shortly afterwards we got going. What I had not anticipated was that for whatever reason, material sent to Europe was subject to wholesale unreliability and apparent lack of interest. I would be responsible for, say, 30 members. In a typical mailing from the U.S. I would be sent 28 copies of SFWA BULLETIN, and these would be accompanied by 32 address-labels. Of these 32 names and addresses, at least a half would be incorrect or out of date, three would be for people of whom I had never heard, and five would be for people I knew had resigned. I used to dread receiving the SFWA parcels, knowing that I lost a day whenever they turned up. Every time I had to write back to the States asking for extra copies, asking for confirmation of new members' addresses, asking why their records were always out of date. More often than not, any reply I got came late; sometimes there was no reply at all.



Things never got any better; with every change of administration the incompetence became more committed and inspired. After about a year, I had to hire a secretary to deal with all the correspondence (at my personal expense). One parcel contained over 80 copies of the BULLETIN, printed on heavy-stock quarto paper and air-mailed at extortionate cost. To this day I don't know why I was sent the extra copies; I held on to them for two years, then sent them to be recycled. There was not one single mailing, in all the time I acted as agent, that was straightforward.

'As a result of this, I am notoriously unsympathetic to the pleas that SFWA officers do it for love, do it unpaid, and give of their spare time. SFWA officers normally serve for one or, at most, two years. I slogged away, unpaid, unacknowledged and unthanked, for five years.

In the end I passed the work over to Andrew Stephenson. He put up with the unreliable mailings, irrelevant letters and perplexing silences for two or three years, then he jacked it in as well. Now it's done by Fred Clarke.

'It is from this experience -- not from anything else -- that I am convinced the generalized SFWA attitude to overseas members is that they are a nuisance, that they are not first-class citizens, that they are not at all relevant to the running of SFWA in particular and SF in general and that they are more trouble than they are worth. All the correspondence I amassed over the years bespeaks of this attitude.

'But here is Jerry Pournelle's version of what happened: "... 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".

'None of this is true. One thing that's odd is that Pournelle was President of SFWA while I was agent, and yet he seems not to realize that it was me. Perhaps he's thinking it was Andrew Stephenson; if so, he had better start apologizing, as Andrew (a mild person) spluttered with rage when he read Pournelle's account of what is on record as being one of SFWA's biggest fuck-ups in a decade of incompetence.

'As far as I can see, this passage from Mr. Pournelle's letter is characterized by the same hyperbole as elsewhere. Which brings me to the second matter of fact.

'Mr. Pournelle's account -- which is remarkably defensive, considering -- of how Stanislaw Lem was kicked out of SFWA, confirms almost everything I wrote in my article. But by a marvelous piece of sophistry, what we now discover is that Lem wasn't thrown out, but was being done a favor! We all thought he had been fired; now we're told he turned down the chance of promotion!

'But seriously, the old lies continue. Why won't they admit they threw Lem out? Why do they go on with this pretence that Lem was breaking the by-laws? Pournelle is a former President of SFWA ... why does he perpetuate the falsehood?

(We, the people who stick up for Lem, would probably forgive them if only they'd confess.)

'Incidentally, to pick up a point from Jack Chalker's letter: Chalker

says that I "revere" Stanislas Lem. It makes no difference to my stand on the Lem Affair ... but the fact, and the whole point, is that I don't "revere" Mr. Lem. I've never met him, I've never corresponded with him, and I don't care for the pieces of his fiction I've come across. The only work of his I've read to the end was his article about SFWA. I am about as disinterested in Lem as it is possible to be.

'Finally, the Nebula Award. Here are some quotes from the people who wrote to SFR:

'Jack Williamson: "I'm not sure that the Nebulas have been any more valid than the Hugos". Robert Bloch: "It will be interesting to see just how the Nebula system is defended after Priest's analysis". Jerry Pournelle: "The Nebula Award is fatally flawed". Jack Chalker: "Priest is more charitable than I am. The Nebulas are and will remain a joke". (The last two quotes from people blustering against my arguments ...)

'Yet again we hear the solitary defense of the Nebula: the Award brings in money, both to the winners and to the organization. For this, SFWA puts up with its fatally flawed joke.

'Although Mr. Pournelle seems to think I was urging that SFWA be abolished, the point was that the Nebula should be abolished to help restore SFWA's standing.

'It is my direct experience that individual SFWA members say and repeat the sort of things that Pournelle and Chalker said in their letters. No one seriously believes that the Nebula means anything any more. No one has ever denied my arguments. Yet Pournelle claims the "vast majority" of members wish to keep it. I happen to believe that it is the contrary that would be true. But because the assumption persists that any award is better than no award, successive SFWA administrations pussyfoot around the subject. My article said we should junk the Award once and for all. If SFWA polled its members directly on that subject the membership would endorse the abolition with a sense of relief.

'Chalker also says that the arguments against the Nebula apply equally to other awards, notably the Hugo. Wrong. For the following reasons:



'1. The Nebula is confined in theory and practise to work published within the U.S.; the Hugo, in theory at least, is open to work from all countries.

'2. The Nebula is voted on by a select group, limited in number, and one which represents a narrow band of literary taste; the Hugo is open to anyone who registers for a Worldcon, its electorate is unlimited in number, and its literary taste is as wide as possible (in SF terms).

'3. The Nebula operates an ongoing nominations system, encouraging vested interests to lobby and campaign; the Hugo nominations are write-ins.

'Yet in spite of this, the Nebula is interchangeable with the Hugo as a popularity poll. Defenders of the Nebula often point to the fact



that both the Nebula and Hugo have frequently gone to the same titles, and claim this legitimizes the Nebula. Why can't they see that the opposite is true? For the Nebula to have any independent justification, its criteria and, thus, its beneficiaries should be quite different.

'Although I believe writers' organizations should not give prizes it seems urgent that SFWA should go on doing something. It appears to fulfill some kind of need. In which case: a few years ago I suggested a constructive alternative. This was to replace the Nebula with a retrospective prize, awarded every year to titles published (say) five years earlier. This would have the undoubted advantage of diminishing the effect on sales and promotion, thus emphasizing the literary nature of the award. Also, it would have a valid rationale behind it: SFWA would be acknowledging that certain named works had had an influence on the way SF is written and appreciated.

'For example, under this system we might now be deciding that a Nebula-winning novel like THE DISPOSSESSED was indeed influential, that it had outlived mere popularity, that it has enduring qualities, and has had a long-term effect on the way we understand and enjoy and write science fiction. But would we say the same about other Nebula winners, such as RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA or THE GODS THEMSELVES? In five years' time, will we see ENEMY MINE as a seminal work?'

# LETTER FROM FRED SINGER  
U.P.S.F. COORDINATOR  
HAWAIIAN AMERICAN SCHOOL  
APO, NY 09165

December 16, 1980

'Your columns on the chicanery in the publishing industry provides much food for thought. I never fail to be amazed at the human capacity for duplicity. People are self-serving; they'll sell their souls for a promotion, prostitute themselves for an ego boost, double-deal for a little gold. Anyone who agrees with Rousseau that human beings are inherently good, is himself blissfully naive.

'All people are alike. It is only the degree, the intensity of the need that sets apart the double-dealing son-of-a-bitch from the saint. Early Christian monks flagellated themselves, starved, stood up for weeks at a time, went to the limit without sleep and one even lived on top of a fifty-foot pillar for thirty years. They wanted recognition: partly from their fellow man but mostly from God.

'Cultures differ, times differ but people remain the same; driven by a need for self-esteem, need to feel one's life has purpose and meaning. For most people of the past, religion provided that meaning; but take away God and the vacuum is filled with money, power, praise, sexual conquest and generally outdoing the other guy in the competitive tumble we call human society. Even those early monks played one-upsmanship for God's favor.

'Perhaps we are this way because we evolved this way. Pugnacity, aggressiveness and selfishness were survival traits in our primitive predecessors. It was a brutal existence but it insured the strongest possible species which is what nature is all about. Our ancestors learned that cooperation aided survival, so they congregated in groups. Within the social group males naturally jockeyed for leadership positions and territory. Those that em-



erged with the higher statuses got the best territories and the best ladies -- and mated. Those at the bottom got nothing and died childless. The weak die off, the strong have babies. So we evolved into aggressive, competitive, cooperative social beings.

'Now take this pugnacious creature whose instincts force him to compete for a place in the dominance hierarchy, put a suit on him and send him to a New York publishing house, and you have the first explanation as to why he'd sell his mother.

'Obviously, not all of us feed our ravenous egos by stomping our fellow man. But fear of failure, failure itself, fear of not gaining the admiration and respect of our peers and fear of living meaningless lives, drives us to extremes. You work your rump off to put together SPFR. I work all hours of the day and night to write science fiction. What do we want? A little recognition, a little approbation, some money and a comfortable niche on the status hierarchy.

'Human beings are born to jockey for position. They hunger for acceptance, crave recognition, seek out stimulation and spend their lives in quiet desperation, knowing full well they have failed.

'Which brings me to the writing of science fiction.

'Science fiction begins with ideas. Plot wraps the idea in an intriguing package while characterization carries the whole thing forward. Characters have generally been subordinated to idea and plot in this genre. That's acceptable. However, if the reader can be made to hunger for the fate of the characters and

wonder at the otherworldliness of their plight, then you have what is known as writing.

'The point of all this is that if one seriously digs into the core of human motivation, then characters become more believable, and, for that matter, so do plots.

'George R.R. Martin did this superbly in SANDKINGS and that's why it won many awards. The idea was fine, but it was his understanding of the flaws of human behavior that formed the basis of the plot and made it zing with reality. It worked because we recognized a bit of ourselves there.

'Käte Wilhelm's WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG, literally sings with human characters and their failings. She took human beings, multiplied them into clones and developed problems from their less than perfect psyches.

'Which brings me to alien creatures.

'Science fiction writers know that if you scratch an alien you will find a human lurking beneath. No matter how weird, nebulous, scaled or mucus-dribbling an alien is, his motivation must be human. If he had no recognizable human qualities, he would be unintelligible. The fastest way to lose your audience is to hand them a pile of esoteric claptrap that does not fit with a human's perception of reality. If the alien is sentient then his motivation, no matter how cleverly disguised, must be human.

'I'd better stop here or that very human emotion, boredom, might set in. My train of thought, fueled by your editorials, really chugged along.

'After all is said and done, however, you are correct in your warning. Not too long ago I took one of those "Writer's tests" to qualify for a writer's school -- only I answered the questions wrong, just to see what would happen. My responses to the word usage, vocabulary and powers of observation sections were clumsy and inappropriate, certainly not the work of a potential writer. And guess what? They sent me a couple of glowing letters about how well I did and how promising my writing potential was. They spend their days lying to people. I couldn't live like that.

'Yes, Richard, it's a tough road; we are ambushed at every turn. Still it's the only road we've got.

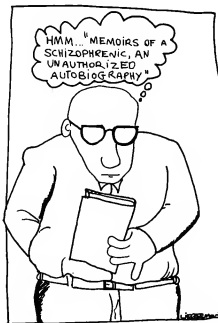
'Thanks for the warning. And keep doing the superb job on SPFR. It's the best thing around in the field.'

# LETTER FROM STEVEN GRANT  
649 E. Johnson St., #1  
Madison, WI, 53703  
August, 1980

'As you're usually interested in conditions on the East Coast, let me assure you: they stink. I'm bailing out before the crash, and I'll feel a little better when I'm living somewhere where you don't have to depend on distributors to get food. Rents here are abominable -- some places are one-room with kitchenette and bathroom (and a few without bathroom) for \$895 and up. My own one-bedroom, in a mildly scummy but perfectly satisfactory area, is \$265, and considered the best bargain in town by everyone I know. The price will be going up to over \$300 when I leave -- and it will still be the best price in town. Transportation is getting continually worse, thermal conditions are at their blazing worst, blocks of streetlights suddenly go out at night as you are walking down the streets, taxes and every other cost are going up and up, and every third person you meet walking down Broadway -- and I live far north of the really crazy section of it -- is talking to an imaginary friend at the top of his lungs.

'On top of everything, Citibank and Chase Manhattan are moving to South Dakota. What's good enough for Citibank is good enough for me.'

((I don't understand how all those crazy people manage to pay their rent. Or maybe you have to be crazy to live in New York and pay exorbitant rents?))



# LETTER FROM TONY DAVIS

Chairman SFSA

(Science Fiction South Africa)  
C/O Newsroom, THE STAR  
POB 1014, Johannesburg 2000  
South Africa  
October 16, 1980

'A few words from this end of the world ...

'A crying shame is not being able to find a new SF title in the local bookstores, a crying shame is trying to find Volume 20 of E.C. Tubb's Dumarest series and finding Volumes 19 and 21 on the racks, and a REAL crying shame is not being able to buy a helluva lot of SF titles because they are BANNED.

'That's right, banned. And not just because there may be porn. It could be for reason of religious content or drugs or even because of the dust jacket cover!

'This is the case in South Africa where the Directorate of Publications protects the public from "Undesirable literature!". There exists a mammoth tome which is regularly updated and contains thousands of book titles which have been banned in South Africa over the last 25 years or so.

'And science fiction hasn't escaped the purge.

'Skimming through the "Jacobson's Guide of Objectionable Literature" one can find all sorts of SF titles and sometimes it really boggles the mind why some books cannot be imported to South Africa.

'There are several topics which are "no-nos" here: sex, religion, politics, mysticism and drugs.

'One early SF title to face the censors' wrath was an Ace "D" series double by L. Sprague de Camp and Clifford Simak with "Ring Around the Sun" and "Cosmic Manhunt!". Having read these stories it's hard to figure out why the book was banned, except there is a rather sultry-looking blonde on the paperback cover.

'Other banned notable SF writers include: Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock, Harlan Ellison, Samuel Delany, Norman Spinrad and even Robert Heinlein. Heinlein was banned for "Stranger in a Strange Land" -- likely because of the religious implications and the censors probably were not too wild about "grokking". Moorcock's "Behold the Man" was banned for its religious views, and Philip Jose Farmer's "Flesh" -- no need to comment on that one.

'John Ballard has also had several books banned, including CONCRETE ISLAND, CRASH and HIGH RISE.

'One problem seems to be that once one of an author's titles is banned, other subsequent books be-

come subjects of strict scrutiny (once a criminal, always ...)

'A British paperback edition of Brian Aldiss' THE PRIMAL URGE received a listing because of the sensual lady (naked, by the way) on the cover -- so the contents themselves weren't banned -- only the cover. Unfortunately I never saw any copies on sale without the cover.

'There is an appeal board called the Publications Appeal Board which will review banned books and sometimes overturn the banning, although not too frequently.

'And sometimes a hardcover book will be banned but its paperback version will get through. And sometimes even the British paperback version will be banned but not the American version. Don't ask for an explanation.

'I'm not sure whether some of Dick Geis' serials printed in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW would get through here. I do have my doubts!'

*((I'm amazed that SFR seems to get through to the few SA subscribers. If SFR does get through unexamined it is only because the customs/Post-at examiners, etc. assume it a dry, safe, academic publication.))*

*((I'm sorry your government is so afraid and stupid; naked censorship such as you describe is a sure sign of ham-handed incompetency and obvious lack of subtlety and imagination.))*

# LETTER FROM NEVILLE J. ANGOVE

POB 770, Canberra City ACT  
Australia 2601  
October 6, 1980

'The main point of this letter is the assumption inherent in Reynolds' bald statement "I cannot think of a single case in history of a people who had achieved Capitalism ever going back to Feudalism ..." (and so on, until the end of that paragraph).

'Firstly, the only real element of social evolution that varies is the aggregation of power -- societies' power structures evolve from the single absolute leader to the mass "democracy" and back again with monotonous regularity. All other factors are really only superficial. For example, the North American social system can just as easily and accurately be described as Feudalistic as it is described as being Capitalistic: There is an absolute monarch (but under parliamentary control vis a vis Prince John), a large group of political heavies (who are not necessarily elected representatives), and a larger group of vested interests whose financial support is needed for the political administration to function (the barons). Finally, there are the masses -- serfs, artisans, merchants who must be appeased in various ways and to various degrees or they will withdraw their support from the incumbent. Even in the Middle Ages, the King had to have either the support of the masses or the support of the barons or of the clergy in order to survive. The only in which Capitalism differs from Feudalism lies with the fact that the serf can leave his master without fear of death -- and that was not an important defining criterion for Feudalism anyway!





'Finally, "(Feudalism)" is not "one of the most inefficient socio-economic systems the human race has ever devised". It survived -- and probably is still surviving -- a damn sight longer than Capitalism in its present form. The only measure of efficiency is longevity -- if it promotes the status quo, then it is unarguably efficient, because the prime purpose of any socioeconomic system is the survival of that system. Feudalism probably offers the most stable form of social system that was ever evolved with the only other contender for this honour being the religious dictatorship.'

*((I suspect that both Feudalism and religious dictatorship thrive best in times of minimal technology, mass ignorance, and very low standards of living. Until our civilization breaks down and a terrible anti-science movement takes place, I see no future for Feudalism.))*

# LETTER FROM RONALD R. LAMBERT  
2350 Virginia, Troy, MI 48084  
Nov. 14, 1980

'When you (and certainly you are not alone in this) inveigh against emotions as the bane of humanity, could it be your Judeo-Christian cultural conditioning speaking? Virtually all the credos that have shaped the spiritual climate of our society hold that man is sinful -- i.e., full of sin, in the sense that something in him is inherently uncouth and morally unclean. This is commonly referred to as man's "lower" nature or "bestial" nature, which in turn is usually associated with emotions -- especially those that seem to be instinctively triggered (after all, people say, nothing could be more animal-like than to be driven by "primitive" instincts). As a result, when we see somebody behave with uncalled-for violence, we immediately conclude that the problem is emotion. From there we go on to blame all the ills of the world on emotion.

'No wonder the character of Spock in STAR TREK had such wide appeal; because obviously, if this reasoning is true, the ultimate solution to all our problems must be to eradicate emotion. But, even as was repeatedly demonstrated in the TV series episodes, the Vulcan philosophy is insupportable and patently simple-minded.

'I will utter my heresy as distinctly as possible: There is nothing

wrong with human emotion or with human instinct. There is nothing wrong with human emotional nature, or with human instinctual nature. Consider: It is inconceivable that we could have evolved with the emotions and instincts that we have unless they had rational purpose. We are capable of anger because we need anger. We are capable of fear because we need fear. We react to certain stimuli with sexual interest and arousal because that is how our species reproduces.

'Am I denying that there is any problem? No. I acknowledge that bloody fanatics in Cambodia have all but exterminated their own race and that Big Brother over there in Moscow would just love to introduce us to their "workers' paradise" where it is always 1984. I acknowledge that humans who are not clinically insane nonetheless can shoot down innocent strangers on the street, molest children and raise taxes.

'But the problem is not emotion (or instinct). The problem lies elsewhere. It is not in the rational faculties either. So where is it?

'There is something in between. Between our rational faculties and our emotional/instinctual nature there is an interface. It might be called psychological conditioning. It might be called mindset. It might be called attitude. Or outlook. All these things are involved

'The fact is we choose when and where to invoke our emotions and activate our instincts. Emotions and instincts are faculties that we use. If someone says something to you that is ambiguous but might be insulting, you may stand there for awhile in puzzlement, trying to decide if you ought to be angry. You do not become angry and undergo all the instinctive preparations for combat until you decide you ought to.

'Of course, not all such decisions are conscious decisions. But even the unconscious decisions are made on the basis of conditioning that you have set up by previous conscious decisions -- or by your general attitude, mindset, etc. The way you consciously view and interpret the world around you determines how you will use your emotional/instinctual faculties.

'Even the most fundamental emotions and instincts we possess have no inherent power to rule us, as if we were helpless puppets pulled by our DNA strands. All humans are born with an instinctive fear of falling. Yet astronauts can live and work for extended periods in the free-fall of space and rollercoasters are ever popular at amusement parks.

Masters and Johnson claim that sexual preference is in all but a very few cases entirely a matter of conditioning. As evidence, they cite the high rate of success trained therapists have in reconditioning homosexuals to become heterosexuals. All they have to do is desensitize them to certain stimuli and sensitize them to more appropriate stimuli. Masters and Johnson claim it is highly successful. (It is on this basis that they conclude that homosexuality is not a physiological malady, but merely a preference resulting from conditioning.) Homosexuality, thus, is both caused by and can be reversed through conditioning. Surely nothing could be more fundamentally emotional and instinctive to human nature than sex, and yet look at how freely it can be manipulated!

'We have problems because we do not rightly or fully understand things. We invoke the wrong emotions at the wrong times to the wrong degrees, out of ignorance. We misunderstand social situations, we misunderstand ourselves, we jump to faultily-reasoned conclusions, we develop misguided, ill-conceived attitudes and thusly we condition ourselves to respond inappropriately in certain situations.

'The obvious answer -- the real answer -- to all our problems is to seek wisdom, quaint as that may sound. It takes understanding for us to be able to steer our individual courses through life competently.

'Of course, none of us have lived long enough to develop all the wisdom that we need. So we resort to shortcuts, or crutches. These are rule-of-thumb policies such as manners, customs, moral codes, etc. By following these we usually are able at least to minimize mistakes -- though by no means do we eliminate them. But if our lifespans were substantially extended, then we might all have time to develop enough wisdom to deal with the increasing complexity of modern (and future) life with growing competence and rely less on crutches.

'Certainly there is more than mere time involved: wisdom can only be learned by those who try to learn it and high intelligence obviously affords a natural advantage. But I maintain that human beings, as presently constituted, are perfectable. We are capable of infinite development, given the time. Immortality is necessary.

'The "human problem" is solvable. It is within the capabilities of our present faculties. We need not eradicate our emotions or strive like medieval monks to exorcise our "bestial" nature. Like Jesus Christ said, "The truth shall make you

free?" We can go to the stars as we are, and be good. The means are within our grasp."

(No, I didn't 'inveigh' against emotions as mankind's bane (and blessing) because I want something done about it. I was stating what I consider a basic reality: we are mostly ruled, subtly oftentimes, and nakedly, by our emotions. Where self-interest enters the room, intelligence is recruited to justify and implement an emotional decision.

(Ahh... I shouldn't blame it all on emotions; I mean basic drives, instincts, imperatives---food, shelter, mating, nurturing...these priorities masked by "civilization" and social/cultural conditioning, make us do this, say that, etc., in varying degrees among our fellows.

(I do not think this state of affairs is bad or should be changed by tinkering with drugs, with genes, with conditioning or de-conditioning.

(My position is as before: look through history, look around you at the world today. What you see is what you'll get. No radical social or psychological changes are possible for mankind. We might succeed in killing off 90% of us, but that's likely the worst that will happen... if that is actually a bad thing from some points of view.

(I see no point in dreaming of an ideal "solution" to the perceived "bad" side of man's nature. Man is invisible; start tinkering and Ghod knows what you'll bring about. Further, I think mankind is instinctually so conservative it will not permit any changes in the DNA which would actually threaten the species as he is now.

(I frankly consider idealists fools unable or unwilling to face reality. It would be far better to learn the real rules of life, play by them, and have that happiness that goes with being in tune with your self, instead of dreaming impossible dreams and being unhappy with what is, what was, what damn well will be.

THE COVEN IS HAVING A FUND RAISER WITH JANE FONDA AND CHERYL TEIGS AND WILL I PLEASE CONTRIBUTE?



SHEE-IT!  
IN THE OLD  
DAYS, I'D  
GOT TO BAIL  
THEM!

((Yet---it is in the nature of man to also be an idealist, sometimes. You have to accept that, too. I do, somewhat reluctantly. But, then, I'm slightly tainted with a kind of idealism, too.))

# LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER  
113 Deepdale Rd.  
Stafford, PA 19087  
Oct. 30, 1980

Orson Scott Card's genteel wit and his unerring ability to discern when a fight is being picked with him and when it is not, as manifested by his article in SFR #37, has caused me to stop and weigh the possibility that I might be wrong, that I may have said and written things without thinking, in a slapdash, care-less, thoughtless manner.

I am not talking about the discussion of the Lynn books. I refuse to discuss them further in this context, because the author is too fine a person to be needlessly dragged into such a petty squabble.

You see, I have said in public and in print several times that the attacks on Orson Scott Card made by Ted White and others, mostly in THRUST, but also elsewhere, are unfair and uncalled for. While I have never been a great proclaimer of Card's storytelling or critical abilities, I've said more than once that I thought it unduly harsh to suggest that Card's very existence as a professional writer indicates something seriously amiss in the publishing industry, or that certain editors have a lot of explaining to do. Further, when Card became the butt of countless jokes at conventions, when a prominent reviewer called him "the worst writer going", I expressed regret at the fact that fandom apparently requires a whipping boy and has selected Card, now that we don't have Roger Elwood to kick around. I have even expressed some relief that the Card-as-Elwood syndrome seems to be dying down, since I felt that no writer or editor should be treated that way unless he has given enough offense as to overwhelmingly deserve it. And since there are so many amiable mediocrities floating around and they serve a constructive purpose (to give the outstanding writers someone to be standing out from), that I saw no reason for Card to be singled out as a special target for widespread contempt.

I have been given cause to reconsider.

As for accomplishments, Card has made far more money than I have. I suspect my income as a writer could scarcely keep him in tieclips. But I would not trade places with him for anything. This only drives home the fact that money is not the only thing in life, that it should not be one's primary goal.

For this flash of moral enlightenment, I thank him.

Some news, which you will doubtless have in fuller detail before you go to press again, GALAXY and GALILEO have folded. I'm sure this will bring on another one of your gloomy editorial comments, but from the viewpoint of the selling writer, I don't think it has any immediate impact. Both were so infrequent and so overstocked that they were not markets. They were only potential markets, which might have developed in a year or two, once they'd gotten on schedule and worked off some of their backlogs.

This is not to say I don't regret their passing. I do, very much. GALAXY was one of the most important magazines in the history of the field. It has ceased to be a major force late in the Baen editorship, but its final termination now is particularly sorrowful because there was a glimmer of hope that it would be re-established.

My personal regret is that the only story I ever had published in GALAXY was a dumb little joke which probably contributed to its decline. I had a story in the backlog (bought in 1977) which was a lot better, and if published, at least wouldn't have dragged it down further. (So this story remains sold only to an anthology in Germany. I shall have to find a new American market for it.)

Apparently the damage done to GALILEO through the attempt to go to newsstand circulation was so great that it could not be repaired. There are two morals here: a non-slick, 8 1/2 x 11" science fiction magazine is complete suicide in this country. It will be placed on the newsstand next to the large comics, the readers of which do not buy anything which has solid pages of print in it. I've been predicting the immediate failure of every magazine of this type since WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY and I haven't been wrong yet. The only one I've seen that had half a chance was VERTEX, which was slick, and which revived today in the wake of OMNI, might still make it. But COSMOS, ODYSSEY and the rest have all suffered very poor sales for this reason.

ASIMOV'S ADVENTURE struck me as an interesting experiment, because it was actually designed with the realities of the situation in mind (whereas the sophisticated COS-

MOS wasn't), but still the deadly fact that comic book readers don't read fiction got it. Publishers will have to learn that any science fiction magazine which hasn't got a huge budget must be digest-sized.

'The other moral is that a professional, all-subscription magazine is viable. GALILEO proved this. If the newsstand magazines ever fail completely, this is clearly the way to go. It's the way to go anyhow, to diversify the field with more than four editorial viewpoints. So let's keep our fingers crossed for ETERNITY and hope Gregg isn't foolhardy enough to go newsstand in that format.

'Elton Elliott is wrong when he states that the paperback magazine format is "virtually unused". Was he around in the early 70s? Does he remember the Elwood avalanche? What about NEW WORLDS QUARTERLY and QUARK? What about NEW WORLDS monthly, SCIENCE FANTASY and IMPULSE, all of which were paperback magazines in the fullest sense, complete with serials and departments? Not to mention Carnell's "New Writings in SF" series which began in 1964.

'Actually the paperback magazine is a concept developed in the mainstream in the 50s with DISCOVERY, NEW CAMPUS WRITING, NEW WORLD WRITING, etc. and carried over into science fiction by Fred Pohl with STAR, later to blossom in SF just as it was dying in the mainstream. It is hardly new or unploughed ground. As I see it, the science fiction original anthology/paperback magazine is now coming back as a major force after a collapse brought on by overexploitation, a phenomenon I call the Post-Elwood Depression.

'Actually, the original series anthology concept goes much further back both in the mainstream (AMERICAN CARAVAN, CROSS SECTION) and in fantasy, (Lady Asquith's GHOST BOOKS and others), which takes us back to the 1920s. And Charles Dickens edited these Christmas annuals in the middle of the last century ... '

*(I'll be the devil's advocate here and say four editorial viewpoints are enough. There are probably only four basic policies to follow in science fiction/fantasy: the "hard" sf of ANALOG, the "soft" of F&SF, the action-adventure quasi-juvenile of ASIMOV'S, and the Best-we-can-do of AMAZING.*

*(All the natural slots are filled. Other readerships--Sword & Sorcery, for example, seem not to want a magazine format. The Cthulhu readership, for another, can support only a few small circulation semi-pro efforts. A revival of WEIRD TALES was tried and it failed.*

*(I realize each new editor thinks he or she has the right editorial angle, the slant, the good taste, to wrest a chunk of existing readerships of large size to his magazine. The Doing-it-Better approach requires a lot of money to finance the mag until enough sampling readers agree and switch.*

*(The only possible alternative to Doing-it-Better is Doing-it-as-well-but-with-flair! If a new editor has a great in-print personality and is willing to permeate the magazine with it, that will work. John Campbell comes to mind. Sam Merwin, perhaps. Ted White, too, but he didn't have quite the right personality.*

*(Most present sf/fantasy editors seem afraid to show themselves in their magazines. Meaty, gutsy, flavorful, human editorials are extremely rare.)*

# LETTER FROM ED MESKYS  
RFD #1, Box 63  
Center Harbor, NH 03226  
29 Nov. 1980

'John Boardman has no longer been able to read/tape SFR for me for some time now and I need added volunteers. Could you please put something in SFR asking if any of your readers would be willing to tape SFR for me? I will, as before, share the tapes with other blind fans.'

# LETTER FROM JAMES VAN HISE  
10885 Angola Road  
San Diego, CA 92126  
November, 1980

'Thanks for your review of the Harlan Ellison issue of the RBCC. I just wish you had noticed on the "Important" page that single copies require 75¢ postage. That makes you and FANTASY NEWSLETTER that made the same mistake, and maybe some other reviews out there that I haven't seen.

'I noticed your review of THE DEAD ZONE. I can understand your points and although I enjoyed the book very much myself, I can see where someone just coming to King might wonder what all the shouting is about. I suggest you read SALEM'S LOT (which remains not only

WITH A WORD  
PROCESSOR, I CAN  
HACK OUT SCI-FI,  
WESTERNS AND  
GOTHICS JUST BY  
REPROGRAMING  
THE NOUNS...

my favorite King book but his as well) or it develops nicely around a lot of characters without excess wordage and dull detours. King is a very fine writer, but a book like THE DEAD ZONE is good King but not great King. THE SHINING also suffers from too much excess exposition but when it delivers it packs a wallop. I suggest you avoid THE STAND at all costs as its 800 pages has a lot of interesting characters peopling an only novelette-length plot ... and that book has 300 pages less than King actually wrote (as his publisher cut it from 1,100 pages to 800, or it'd be even worse!), so don't pass King off yet. DARK FORCES edited by Kirby McCauley has a fine 40,000-word short novel by King titled THE MIST, which is a better place to start on King than THE DEAD ZONE.

'I recommend his collection, NIGHT SHIFT, as it has quite a wide variety of tales, with only a few weaklings. "Children of the Corn" and "The Mangler" are the two strongest stories in that book, although you may prefer others yet. It also has "One for the Road" which is a sort of short story sequel to SALEM'S LOT. So give King a chance. He is a fine writer and worthy of being a best-selling author, and in fact on the Dick Cavett show last week he was on with Ira Levin, Peter Straub and George Romero, and Cavett remark-

ed that King had become the best-selling writer in the world. The tendency is to dismiss those who seem to be too successful, but in this case his work does deserve the attention.

'I had just started reading GHOST STORY before I received SFR #37 and was pleased to see the review as it's nice to know the book is headed somewhere interesting since it also suffers from using too many unnecessary words to get where it's going, but I'm willing to ride it out one more time in order to reach the pay-off.'

((I still suspicion that an element of deliberate padding---or self-indulgence---goes into the writing of a lot of the pb best-sellers. The editors and publishers want 200,000 to 300,000 word monster manuscripts, because "Big" books are "in". And a thick book by a "name" appears to justify a big fat cover price.

((That's okay. But it makes for novels whose intensity and tension are too often watered down by words, words, words to stretch a 100,000 word plot to twice or thrice that length. That is bad writing, even if it is endured by admiring and loyal readers.))

# LETTER FROM STANLEY SCHMIDT  
Editor of ANALOG  
380 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10017  
November 5, 1980

'Just finished with interest Patricia Mathews' review of our June through October issues. Far be it from me to presume to argue with a reviewer on points of taste (I listen, appreciate the kind words and try to take into account any valid negative criticisms), but please, folks, let's at least get the facts straight.

'For instance: Ben Bova hasn't been associated with ANALOG for over two years -- and even if he had been, he would not have been the one to determine the details of type face and layout. My October editorial was not on "how to write science articles he will buy" -- and I've heard from a good many readers who did understand what it was really about. The article on galaxy formation was by Dr. John Gribbin, not "Briggen", and Charles Arents' name is not "Arments".

'And I can't resist a closing comment on Charlie's story, which Ms. Mathews did not like. That's

her privilege, but she utterly missed the point. Of course it had "extremely bad science at its heart", that was its reason for being. It was a satire; sorry if it was too subtle for you. Yes, you learn that if you want to test for A, you must filter out what is not A. But some tests do wind up filtering out A, too.

'And I might point out that my training did go a little beyond "beginning lab science".'

# LETTER FROM ROBERT COULSON  
Route #3, Hartford City,  
Indiana, 47348  
Dec. 16, 1980

'Arthur R. Toft, in addition to his Laser novels, also had five stories published in AMAZING, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES and FUTURE in the years 1938 and 1939. (Unfortunately, his writing style didn't improve over the intervening years.) He also had a novelization of KING KONG and a bad fantasy novel from Major. Very nice little man; very poor writer.

'In his ecological niches, Lambert left out an important point: there are always fewer predators than there are prey. (And the predators are -- nearly always -- more intelligent.) It's a jungle out there, baby ....

'If pure capitalism has never existed, then Wilson has no idea if it would really work as he predicts. These airy social theories ....

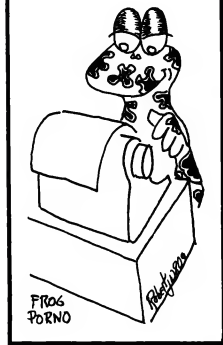
'I think I'll start a system of YANDRO AWARDS, To Promote, Preserve and Protect the Sort of Science Fiction I Like. Everyone else does it, why not me?

'The lack of science fiction in the new glossy science mags is merely evidence that the mass-market reader wants what he/she firmly believes as "truth" in magazines. Fiction magazines haven't done well since WW II, when the facts of life became more awesome, strange, intriguing -- and sickening -- than mere fiction was allowed to be. Now, the cheap fiction is served up on TV and in paperbacks, and magazines and newspapers are supposed to be pure and factual. You know, like NATIONAL ENQUIRER and SOLDIER OF FORTUNE and TRUE CONFESSIONS. "They wouldn't let them print it if it wasn't true."

'The golden Age of porn is 13, too; it's really not very interesting if you don't have to hide the

book/magazine from your parents. Same for the bed-bouncer historicals. Golden Age of gothics is 12. (The fact that a lot of middle-aged men read porn -- and middle-aged women read bed-bouncers -- is easily disposed of. Second childhood. Though, admittedly, a few of the readers never get out of their first childhood, mentally.)'

"...I pushed the fly into her mouth with my tongue."  
"Croak," she said, 'Croak.'"



# LETTER FROM GREGORY BENFORD  
1105 Skyline Drive, Laguna  
Beach, CA 92651  
Dec. 2, 1980

'I was very happy you wanted to take A STRING OF DAYS. I wrote it in a flatout, no-manipulation way and just decided to let the events speak for themselves. Thus there is no "point" imposed, which I think in the end is more valuable than some staged version of life/times.

'Could you mention somewhere in the Feb. issue that A STRING OF DAYS is also published in FOUNDATION, the British SF journal? FOUNDATION is the best semi-academic journal, I think, but it gets little circulation in the U.S.

'I liked this SFR (#37) quite a lot. I read the extended reviews more thoroughly, and in fact would

recommend to you that SFR provide some summary of the outstanding work of the year. LOCUS supposedly does this but it appears so late -- typically, halfway into next year -- that it's pretty useless. I don't know how you would go about finding the outstanding work -- maybe poll your best reviewers, including yourself? or just list your own? (Certainly less work, that!) But it would be of use.

'I'm on the Nebula Jury this year and it is a ferocious task. The shorter lengths particularly are hard -- there's less good work, and many more so-so cases. But the novel is very strong this year.'

(I have resisted, and will continue to resist, the kind of "Best" lists you mention...until the field shrinks to the point where one person can read all of it in a year. Not likely to happen soon, huh? All I expect to do in these pages is keep on publishing as many reviews as possible, given this format, and not really pretend to do a comprehensive job. Every week I know there are novels published which no one will likely ever read and review for SFR. It's sickening.)

# LETTER FROM IAN COVELL  
2 Copgrove Close, Berwick Hills,  
Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS3 7BP,  
England  
18 Dec., 1980

'I want to say that I read Russ Martin's RHEA about a week before I read Paulette (Minare', nice name)'s review of it. The book was issued under the title CHAINS in this country. I agree with everything the lady says with the note that she should make a few more comments about the book beyond the plot -- complex as the plot becomes, and she only really talks about the first half or so -- giving her own reactions to the explicit brutality, or using it for a springboard on similar books. (In my country, after the outrageous opening of about a dozen similar mass-murder-of-women-in-erotic-circumstances, including the book DRESSED TO KILL, a woman's organisation boycotted then attacked a cinema showing the latter film and then went around wrecking erotica bookshops and sexshops within walking distance. That violence will escalate. Especially since we currently have an unfound maniac who started with prostitutes and now kills one woman on average of about six months or less.)

film, pages 10/11) of myth to add to the werewolf legend. HAMMER has been producing -- as you may know, though I understand the U.S. TV versions are censored on much blood -- a TV series called HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR or something similar. Anyway, one episode had a bride raped by a werewolf, and made pregnant, like many before her. Subsequently this woman -- and here's the new-myth bit -- started to eat more and more raw and rarer meat, desired brutality during sex, often to extreme levels, and was prepared to return to the werewolf to give birth (and die). And there you thought werewolves weren't fun....

'Page 29: What amuses me about the Cherry review is the fact that

Wooster doesn't actually say what the book's about. Not a difficult thing to overlook, since Cherry seems to have the same difficulty most of the time. As for the SPINNER: I agree totally with McDonald, with the further note that after I received a copy of her latest, THE FLUGER, I reviewed my Pischeria collection (and I do have them all) and there and then decided to sell them all; I do not know what happened to Pischeria, but after STAR RIDER she seems to have spent more than a few pages on plot, penning longer and longer stories with less and less sense.

'Page 33: What McDonald misses in his review of the LORD OF THE TREES/MAD GOBLIN double-volume is

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5. LOCATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS OR GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHERS (Not printers) 1525 NE Ainsworth, Portland, OR 97211	6. NAMES AND COMPLETE ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR PUBLISHER (Name and Address) Richard E. Geis, 1525 NE Ainsworth, Portland, OR 97211	7. OWNER (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated.)	8. FOR COMPLETION BY NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AUTHORIZED TO MAIL AT SPECIAL RATE (Section 133.123, PSN) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> HAVE NOT CHANGED DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS <input type="checkbox"/> HAVE CHANGED DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS (If changed, publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement.)
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'We have a new facet (sic your

the fact that there is a non-erotic pair of sequels to the savage book, A FEAST UNKNOWN -- so he has missed many references and plot details from the first; read without that of the first volume (look at the subtitles of the Lord Grandrith books!)--you miss a lot.

'Orson Scott Card's denigration of THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS ... in respect of RIDDLEMASTER and DHALGREN on behalf of TALES OF NEVERYON (I thought both were rubbish) has convinced me yet again (I really do thank Card for these constant reminders), that I'll stay away from Card's own work. We have no common ground on artistry, style, sentiment, authors or enjoyment. If he didn't keep doing this reminding, I, forgiving soul that I am, would one day actually try to read a second Card novel. God forbend me.

'The short fiction in magazine/anth reviews were very neat, and keep me in touch with who is publishing what and where. My only grouse (the plural of grouse is grease -- and that is something to grouse about) is with Patricia Mathews who can't seem to stop inserting her own pet feelings about feminism versus male chauvinism. (For someone dedicated to the eradication of such practises, I just love this line:

"... A man of our culture and his years bore no traces of the weaknesses common to men ..."

My italics, naturally. If that is not rampant female chauvinism of the blindest sort ...)

'P. 58/59: Since you quote by C.M. Kornbluth, may I suggest once again that you reread and urge others to reread SHARK SHIP by CMK? A terrifying story now it is true. Same thing happened with another book I read the other day, pubbed in 1971; it is deadly accurate on the current state of politics. You wouldn't know it -- an English book by an English author.

'I have said a little more than I meant, but I thought the final comments might be of interest to you:

'ALIEN REALMS, latest in the Lord Tedric series written by Gordon Eklund is still being published over here with only E.E. Doc Smith's name on the cover, and no word, in or out, that says anything about a collaborator and especially Eklund. What is bothersome, is just how far Eklund is diverging not only from Smith's original (very original) concept of Tedric, but also from Smith's ethics/morality. Point 1: The only passion so far shown in the series is strictly alien (mutant) males with attractive Earth women -- an Eklund trademark but not Smith -- and one

passion is so ugly, adulterous and destructive (the distraught husband allows himself to be killed) that the relationships are an insult to everything Smith believed in; the second is that Tedric, naturally for Eklund, is remote, uninvolved and almost asexual, so removed he is impossible, so unfeeling he too is an insult to Smith who fervently believed that men and women desired each other and more often than not thought of sexual encounters as at least possible, if constrained. Eklund, I repeat, has gone as far overboard in his nihilistic, crude, cruel, vicious and emotionally empty works that Smith -- did he have any defender with clout -- would probably have had Eklund removed from the series after the second if not first book. That the series continues to appear -- especially with no notification that Gordon Eklund is involved -- is an insult to Smith fans... and that means me.'

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# AND THEN I SAW....

BY THE EDITOR

## THE STUNTMAN (R)

plays with illusion and reality as it portrays a movie within a movie within a movie.

The focus is on a young drifter being chased by cops who accidentally kills a stuntman (he thinks) and is taken on by the all-mighty Director, played with godlight sophistication and cynicism by Peter O'Toole.

It is O'Toole's movie, a fine, fascinating acting job---a bravura performance actors love.

The illusions created by the stunt crew and special effects dept. are interwoven with reality..."reality"...and the Game is monitored and controlled and enjoyed by The Director.

To my mind the movie cheats at the end...or seems to...and betrays what seems to be its bedrock reality. But maybe....

You may want to see this film twice, once for the movie, once to watch O'Toole. He's very fine in this.

## THE AWAKENING (R)

stars Charlton Heston as an obsessed archeologist who discovers the undefiled tomb of an evil Egyptian queen 4000 or so years old. There is a Dark Power released--and the ancient creature's soul attempts resurrection in the body of Heston's daughter.

The story spans eighteen or twenty years and is well-made, with fine sets, convincing effects, a lot of menacing low-key scenes with high-key tension.

Very convincing in its way. The R-rating is for violence and grue.

This will easily be on TV in a year or two.

## FADE TO BLACK (R)

promises more than it delivers, through no fault of the actors and actresses involved.

Take a young jerk who is obsessed with old movies, burden him with a bitch mother, cruel fellow workers and boss... Add a girl who thoughtlessly stands him up on a date...

Anyway, already marginally schizoid and paranoid and dangerous,



he goes over the edge and sinks into a killer James Cagney persona.

The movie becomes utterly predictable and boring, even unto the revenge killings and final death scene.

If you're a movie buff you might want to see it; the movie does pay a bastardly homage to the oldies.

## TERROR TRAIN (R)

is a well-made, tightly paced, suspense/horror film with roots in HALLOWEEN.

A psycho who was critically traumatized as a college freshman during Hell Week [He was lured into a bedroom by a girl in the dark and climbs into bed with a planted corpse. He freaked out!] seeks his deadly revenge on those involved in the prank on a Senior class week-end outing on a special train hired by one of the class who is Rich, four years later.

Jamie Lee Curtis (who played a lead in HALLOWEEN) is one of the girls involved in the prank.

The killer, disguised as one and then another of the class, goes about his deadly revenge. The body count goes up, the train crew try to find him, the Guilty Ones get terrified....

It's a bloody film. And, as in HALLOWEEN, there is an element of the supernatural as the killer performs feats of travel from car to car of the train, and survives various attacks that would kill/disabled ordinary men and which seem impossible.

The film does cheat, especially at the end. But still...it's worth seeing as a gripping, involving, high-tension movie.

## CABO BLANCO (R)

is a sloppy, cliché-ridden, awkward, miscast botch about a bar/hotel owner (Charles Bronson) in a coastal town on a Central American country. He is wanted for murder in the USA and must pay off the locals to keep from being deported. The time is ---1948 or so---and up on the hill lives a powerful escaped Nazi. Into the town comes a lovely young woman...

Seems everyone is seeking the treasure in a sunken ship in the harbor. All is stereotype and cliché.

This is a turkey and only for very dedicated Bronson devotees.

## PRIVATE EYES (G)

featuring Don Knotts and Tim Conway as inept, Laurel & Hardy detectives in England investigating the murder of a Lord and Lady Morley, is a fine movie for anyone 12-years-old and under.

It's all sight gags and moron shtick. Some fine bits-of-business but mostly creaky situations involving the "murders" of all the staff of the Morley mansion and a run-around in secret passages.

Some horse manure humor must have strained the G-rating a bit.

**HERO AT LARGE (G)** is a movie that would have wowed the public thirty or forty years ago, as it pounds away at idealism, doing Good, helping people....

John Ritter, a really good comedy-character actor, plays a struggling young actor in New York who takes his movie promotion "role" as Captain Avenger seriously, and foils a robbery of a mom & pop store, likes the furor it causes, and tries it again....

Cynical media manipulators try to use him, he almost loses his girl friend... He is conned into a phony Captain Avenger heroism, is "unmasked," and in a black moment is about to sink away, his life, his career in shreds. But he is a real hero, and cannot resist rescuing a boy from a burning building, gets his reputation back, his girl, and we smile and feel good as the movie ends. New York has been saved from an evil mayor, an evil PR man, and the idealistic citizens of New York are energized with admiration and renewed hope and virtue.

Sure.

**WILLIE & PHIL (R)** explores, in the European movie-maker's style, the deep friendship between two young men and the woman whom they share and who shares them. They all go through changes---life-style, values and character, over a period of nine years and across the country (and world) and back. In the end the woman leaves them to pursue her career...or so it seems.

This film speaks about loyalty, the varieties of love, sex, and is also probably essentially dishonest in that the likelihood of three such ideally suited, altruistic, pure, loving individuals getting together quite by accident is vanishingly small. **WILLIE & PHIL** is as idealistic and phoney in its way as **HERO AT LARGE** in its way.

But the acting is good, the humor and low-key satire is fine, and the movie moves right along. Worth seeing but not believing.

**THE BOOGIE MAN (R)** borrows from **THE EXORCIST**, **THE AMITYVILLE HORROR**, **HALLOWEEN**...to name a few. It is a clumsy supernatural/horror film whose only originality is in a grotesque new way to kill two people. The Evil ghost/force/soul of a murdered man, released by the breaking of a mirror which "witnessed" his murder, is

triggered by reflected light from pieces of this mirror. The double-killing: the Evil Force thrusts a long butcher knife through a boy's neck till it emerges eight inches from his mouth. Gore. Then his girl friend comes to see what he's doing, in the shadows inside his car, and the Evil Force turns the boy's head to show her the horrible way he died, she recoils but the Force slams the car door against her, pushing her suddenly forward to a death-kiss with the boy--the blade penetrating the back of her throat to her spinal column.

Some short bare-breast scenes, as a buxom teenager is unable to stop her hand from first cutting her bra loose and then piercing her throat with a scissors.

Mostly bad acting, too. A Jerry Gross production, perhaps made in Italy, partly. A downer. Don't see it.

**IT'S MY TURN (R)** gives Jill Clayburgh another turn as a thirtyish woman at loose ends, seeking a direction in her life. She did it better in **AN UNMARRIED WOMAN**. This time there are more laughs and less misery.

Charles Grodin plays the lover who loses her, and Michael Douglas plays the man who might get her, maybe.

A kind-of a Feminist film. Grodin seems to be making a career of this type of role, as in the new **SEEMS LIKE OLD TIMES** (which I haven't seen yet).

This is worth seeing for Grodin's scenes; he's very good.

**LOVING COUPLES (R)** is a forgettable bedroom farce featuring Shirley MacLaine and...uh... I forgot.

She plays a doctor whose doctor husband doesn't appreciate her... They both take lovers... The usual safe American sex jokes and complications. Happy American Ending.

**FLASH GORDON (PG)** was produced, directed, and scripted to be a tongue-in-cheek extravaganza, to allow the youth audience to be wowed by great, colorful costumes and fantastic sets, and to feel

sniggeringly superior to that "comic book kid stuff."

So the actors and actresses delivered the dumb dialogue with straight faces, went through their dumb actions, and pretended they weren't embarrassed.

The audience was not amused. No one likes to be patronized and produced-down-to.

The problem was in conception and whoever conceived this movie as a campy bit-of-fun with an old comic strip---should be shot.

The original comic strip is superior to this movie. The opening credits showed flashes of panels from the original.

It comes to me now---I see ---the director, producer, scenarist---they were satirizing, re-creating [but doing it better!] the **FLASH GORDON** movie serial with **Buster Crabbe**!

But...why? Don't they even yet realize S-F films are now measured against **STAR WARS** and **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**? Don't they yet know why Lucas wins and they lose? He loves science fiction. He puts every bit of integrity and realism he can manage into his films. He doesn't cheat! And he doesn't insult his audience.

The "creators" of this **FLASH GORDON** obviously felt contempt for the material and the audience. I hope they take a multi-million dollar bath!

Don't pay money to see this; it'll only make you weep at the wasted sets and costumes, the scenes that were thrown away.

This kind of shit is not what the 15 to 25-year-olds want to see in science fiction.

But 60-year-old monkeys see **SUPERMAN** and the 60-year-old monkeys do **FLASH GORDON**. Badly.

Wait for the TV showing; it might be better suited for the tube. The price is right.

#### # CARD FROM ALAN D. FOSTER

'In re your comments on the film **THE OCTAGON** in #37, the problem with **Norris**' films is that he is a very gentle, soft-spoken, easy-going fellow who has mastered a very violent discipline, and his producers and writers can't reconcile his actual persona with his physical abilities. Not to mention the fact that filmmakers don't understand karate and accomplished practitioners of karate don't understand film.

'For example, **Norris**' fight scenes are technically expert but not half as exciting as they ought to be. The viewer who goes to see his films generally wouldn't know kata from kat food, a point which **Bruce Lee** always understood.'

# OTHER VOICES

## THE WANTING FACTOR

By Gene DeWeese

Playboy Paperbacks, POB 690, Rockville Center, New York, NY, 11571. November, 1980, 303 pp., \$2.50. ISBN: 0-872-16693-7

REVIEWED BY PAULETTE MINARE'

This is a superior, unique and well-written occult mystery. Not until the end of the book does Gene DeWeese let the reader know the identity of the villain who is bringing spiritual death to many townspeople, leaving only soul-less empty husks which walk and talk normally but whose souls have been wrenched out, screaming and lost into a cold, terrifying limbo. This difference can easily trigger into action heretofore repressed desires, angers and frustrations.

The multi-faceted religious overtones, with no resemblance whatsoever to seances, levitation and such, can provide much food for thought. The villain, thousands of years old, is himself a terrified, self-loathing religious victim with parallels to the life and death of Christ. In his confusion, he thinks on page 190:

"Why ... If a God truly exists, then why does He allow me to go on? If He wants me to alleviate suffering, why does He allow me to be the instrument of so much horror and death? Could it be vengeance? ... Could (He) be that petty and unforgiving? ... Was I too successful? ... Could the ego of God be that tiny? He could not know the answer, not until this life was ended -- was allowed to end ... And then, ... it would be too late ...."

In this setting of Brower, an Indiana university town of 10,000, the victims are many. Reed Davis, who has been "saved" in a tent revival meeting, works in a mortuary and is praying incessantly for a vision, a sign, to be a savior, and prepares to kill the Anti-Christ. He receives confusing "visions" but always manages to rationalize them. He is puzzled that in his latest "vision" there was no blood in his thorn-torn brow, but blood is on His lips. Suddenly it becomes clear to him as he rationalizes on page 174:

"... On His lips, as if the drops of blood were words! ... Of course! It was so simple! Blood was the answer!"

Reed, secure in his sure knowledge, now able to sleep peacefully, considers himself a "called" minister, and refers to the unsavory cannibalistic practices of Christian religions in the taking of communion, the Holy Eucharist and transubstantiation.

Professor Vincent Emerson of the university is experimenting with an "alternate religion", using 30 young people. The initial excitement has become boring in devising more and more outlandish rituals and methods of symbolically sacrificing a person. His solution: "It is only logical to take the next step, to move beyond symbolism to reality!"

Love interest, both homo and hetero, is provided by a psychic, Evanne Link, her psychic friend, Carla Devlin and Aaron Whelan, a newspaper reporter, all of whom are trying, along with the police, to find the source of this horrifying rash of violence, to eliminate it. There are so many highly-interesting characters that I cannot touch on them all here.

At the end of the book, after the villain's identity is known, he deliberately allows himself to die. Now, at last, as his life is ebbing, he will know the truth which he has been always seeking: Do his healing powers and powers of resurrection come from God? Has he been wrong to denounce God as false because he has died countless deaths and his own ever-increasing healing powers have counteracted his own wounds so that he must go on and on living, being an instrument of horror to others? Or does eternal damnation await him this time? And what is eternal damnation? He learns that too.

THE WANTING FACTOR is definitely the elite among occult books, so highly distinctive both in material and in writing expertise, that the reader can easily suspend any disbelief he might feel about psychic phenomena.

\*\*\*\*\*



HI. I AM SIR LANCELOT,  
I NEVER FOUND THE HOLY  
GRAIL, BUT IT WASN'T THE  
FAULT OF MY SMITE-  
RIGHT SWORD, HERE  
SOLD AT ALL BETTER  
SWORD SHOPS.  
GREAT FOR  
TOURNEYS,  
QUESTS,  
AND JUST  
PLAIN  
HACKING.  
MADENS CAN'T  
RESIST  
THEM!



## THE GROTTOS OF THE FORMIGANS

By Daniel da Cruz

Del Rey/Ballantine, 1980, \$1.95

REVIEWED BY DEAN R. LAMBE

Consider the following premises:

- (1) Three black American college professors will have no qualms about spending three years in darkest Zaire on a tribal study that they know is really a secret mineral survey for the South African diamond syndicate.
- (2) When her helicopter crashes while escaping Angola, Cuban mercenary officer Consuela Millan -- after an initial .45 caliber misunderstanding -- will immediately jump into bed with black anthropologist Maynard Griggs.
- (3) Despite their similar New York ghetto backgrounds and radically-differing ideologies, both Consuela and Griggs will lapse into flippant American college student English.
- (4) A hitherto-unnoticed race of termite people, complete with telepathic queen, will capture these two sweethearts.
- (5) Lamarckian evolution.
- (6) Well-telegraphed plot twists ... ah, why go on! Why should anyone go on?

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## UTOPIA 3

By George Alec Effinger  
Playboy, 192 pp., \$1.95

REVIEWED BY LYNNIE HOLDOM

The cover blurb states that this book is a mixture of *Doonesbury* and *Kafka*. This is an excellent capsule summary of the novel, unlike far too many blurb summaries. It appeals to

very specialized tastes, but I predict that those who do like this novel will like it very much. Unfortunately I am not one of these. I prefer novels with some sense of plot, not a continual flow of japes and obviously symbolic incidents.

There isn't much plot. One Dr. Waters of New Mexico has perfected a way to produce people fit to live in Utopia. He practiced his theories in a small town in New Mexico (U-1) then New Mexico (U-2) and now several nations of Europe have donated land to Utopia-3. A couple dozen people are chosen to live in it. One Bo Staefler sneaks in by accident along with an Arab kid who acts as his servant. The book concerns itself with the doings of Bo Staefler, Eileen Brant (who takes up residence in Florence) and Norman Moore (who does the same in Prague). They don't appear to do much except laze around. If this is Utopia, who needs it? Dr. Waters seems to have ideas of getting control of all this land but this isn't really explained either.

Now maybe all this makes sense on a symbolic level. I sure doesn't on a realistic one. I can't believe that all this land would be simply abandoned so a couple dozen people could take up residence. Can you imagine evacuating Florence or Venice or Stuttgart? What's more the new inhabitants aren't doing anything but living the ideal hippy existence only rather drug-free (Utopia disapproves of drug use). And unless the Red Army has changed, I can't imagine them giving up one millimetre of Poland, Czechoslovakia or East Germany or these people leaving their newly-freed homelands.

There are some cute touches (I enjoyed these as they were more interesting than the regular text) such as "Extra Credit", "More Streets and Roads", something familiar to the elementary school bunch and "Have You Been Paying Attention?" -- a quick quiz, but these hardly make up for enduring the rest of the book.

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#### STAR LOOT

By A. Bertram Chandler  
DAW, \$1.75

REVIEWED BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

This is the latest novel in the saga of John Grimes. In this novel Grimes is forced into spying for the Survey Service that had at one time accused him of mutiny (THE BIG BLACK MARK -- also from DAW). The old Grimes "luck" is in full force.

There are several pleasant scenes

in the book, large portions of which take place on a planet of wealthy eccentrics. The planet, El Dorado, is the setting for some of the funniest events -- the Salvation-Army-type chapel sequence is particularly hilarious. There are some factions on the planet that plan to intrude in a nearby conflict and the Survey Service has blackmailed Grimes into finding out what they are up to, even if it means becoming a space pirate in the process.

No pyrotechnics here, just good solid story-telling. If you have not read a John Grimes novel I urge you to get this one.

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#### THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ

By Eloise Jarvis McGraw & Lauren

Lynn McGraw

Illos by Kinderhook, IL, International Wizard of Oz Club, 1980  
104 pp., \$7.00 \*

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

In recent years Sherlock Holmes has undergone a popular renaissance and there have been many books, some reaching best-seller status, to continue his adventures. The land of Oz is still a copyrighted property, but the publisher has been generous in allowing the International Wizard of Oz Club to commission new titles in limited editions. The first two of these were by Ruth Plumly Thompson who had written 19 Oz books between 1920 and 1939. But Ms. Thompson's writing had lost its old magic and even diehard Oz fans couldn't get enthusiastic about the result.

Happily, that can't be said for the Oz Club's third title. Eloise Jarvis McGraw and her daughter, Lauren McGraw, had written the last official Oz book in 1963. THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ has all the sparkle of L. Frank Baum's early volumes. It also has a brisk style that avoids the cloying cuteness that Baum and his successors periodically lapsed into. The result is a book that's not just for nostalgia buffs or completist collectors, but for all who enjoy good juvenile fantasy.

An amusing series of mishaps results in Princess Ozma getting total amnesia and the idea that she must escape from the Emerald City. While her friends (all the old familiar Oz cast) search frantically for her, Ozma (disguised as a boy) wanders off into the wild countryside of Oz. She gains two companions: an earnest young lamb named Lambert and a Gilbert & Sullivanish brigand, Tobias "High Toby" Brindlecul, Jr. (a parody of the lower-class kindhearted rogues

in Regency Romances). They soon encounter one of Ozma's searchers, Kabumpo the Elegant Elephant. Since Ozma (an old friend) doesn't recognize him, Kabumpo assumes that High Toby has enchanted her and is kidnapping her by leading her astray. So he joins them as a friendly stranger and tries to unobtrusively divert their course back to the Emerald City -- which makes them suspect his good intentions when they discover this. The story, then, follows the usual Oz formula of a journey through a magical landscape -- Camouflage Creek, the Molasses Morass, Wyndup Town, Cleanitupia, Hourglass Pass and many more -- with the subplot of the suspicions of the travelers towards each other, and Kabumpo's increasing exasperation as well as his well-meant attempts to rescue Ozma, make him appear more and more sinister to her.

The McGraws have a deft touch at wordplay that even surpasses Baum. Lambert, a white lamb whose most animals are colored to match their habitats (the blue Winkie country, etc.) is ostracized as a "blank sheep". The mechanical-toy inhabitants of Wyndup Town swear "what in the works?" rather than "what in the world?" A Suggestion Box offers such cryptic forecasts as, "Patches of Morning fog. Possible precipitation. High altitude. Lucky day for parrots, school-teachers and mountain climbers born on Tuesday. All others should avoid eating oysters."

In one respect this special Oz book differs from its commercial predecessors. They were all written for young children. Some of them verge on being patronizing. THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ is superficially for children, but it repeatedly lapses into a mature vocabulary. "He was wondering feverishly if it would do any good to create a diversion -- perhaps by falling into a swoon or breaking suddenly into a mazurka..." In particular, High Toby's early 19th-Century dialect, "what'd yee take me for, a clunch?" yelled Toby. "You jest point me that road, and no more argue-bargle, or I use me pops!" would seem to be incomprehensible to young children. But of course this book is not intended for children, but for the adult readership of the International Wizard of Oz Club. As such it's an excellently-crafted work, apparently simple but not simplistic. Adults will enjoy it and so will children if adults are handy to explain the hard words for them. (Such as those who read aloud to their children.) The Oz Club's limited editions are not wellknown outside of Oz fandom, but THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ deserves to be. Don't pass it up.

\* The \$7.00 includes postage. Make checks payable to the International

Wizard of Oz Club. Send to Fred M. Meyer, 220 North Eleventh Street, Escanaba, MI, 49829.

THEY WALKED LIKE MEN, ALL FLESH IS GRASS AND ALL THE TRAPS OF EARTH. All are Avon paperbacks.)

#### A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS

By Edgar Pangborn  
Dell, \$1.95  
Reprint of a 1954 work, 223 pp.

REVIEWED BY JOHN DIPRETE

Very good writing, excellent prose style and poetic brilliance infuse this narrative of Good vs. Evil, in the guise of two Martian Observers -- one a Do-Gooder intent on Earth's survival, the other a Renegade who hankers for our destruction. (Er, the former is Good, the latter is Evil.) Both vie for the heart and soul of Angelo Pontevocchio, twelve-year-old genius upon whose fate the life and strife of Earth abides.

Winner of the International Award (for this book), Edgar Pangborn has written several near-classics: WEST OF THE SUN, DAWY and STILL I PERSIST IN WONDERING (all new Dell reprints).

A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS is highly recommended for souls who lust for hard SF, poetic virtuoso and people-centered fiction.

#### WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN?

By Clifford D. Simak  
Avon, \$1.95, 191 pp.  
Reprint of a 1967 work

REVIEWED BY JOHN DIPRETE

This is straight SF, with the extrapolation idea being ... cryonics.

Earth's worldwide future industry of freezing the dead, to preserve bodies until death can be cured, lays the groundwork.

Main theme: crime and punishment. There's a verdict of execution for a free felony which leads to -- non-freezing; a guilty defendant is denied cryonics (and, hence, eventual immortality) at life's end.

Side theme: a priest who seeks, numbly, the One True God. A fanatic. A suffering, agonized soul, threatened by "cryonic atheism".

Incidentally, the poetic title of the book refers, in a pleading manner, to the moral questions involved in reviving the dead.

Good readable book. Action-oriented.

(Several new reprints of Simak titles have recently appeared --

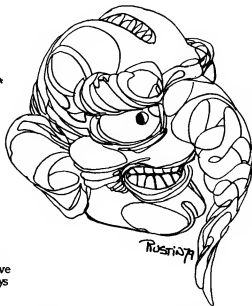
#### THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

By Douglas Adams  
Harmony Books, 1980, hc, \$6.95

REVIEWED BY ALLEN VARNEY

This is the funniest book I've ever read. Based on the Hugo-nominated 1978 BBC Radio series, it was published in England last year (Pan Books) and has finally made it over here. I had to go to London for a two-dollar paperback; on the whole it's cheaper to stay home with the hardcover.

The Guide of the title is a relaxed Encyclopedia Galactica, concerned not with dry history or statistics but with what you need to know about anything. How to avoid the gaze of the Ravenous Bugblatter



Beast of Traal. The best way to smuggle Antarean parakeet glands. Why an interplanetary hitchhiker's most important possession is his towel. On the cover of the Guide is DON'T PANIC in large, friendly letters. In short, a wholly remarkable book.

Ford Prefect, an itinerant researcher for the Guide, hitches a ride to Earth and has been stranded for fifteen years as the story starts. He escapes with a Terran friend, Arthur Dent, only moments before the Earth is blown up to make way for a hyperspatial express route. From here the story becomes improbable. And hilarious.

It's hard to list all the ways this book is funny. There are the names, like Lunkwill and Fook and Zaphod Beeblebrox. The characters, like Slartibartfast (he helped design the coastlines of Earth; he got an award for Norway) and Marvin the wretched robot ("Pardon me for breathing, which I never do anyway so I don't know why I bother to say it, oh God I'm so depressed"). The settings, like Magrathea (whose inhabitants will build worlds to your specifications; you wouldn't believe their catalogue). The dialogue, which features numerous exchanges like this one, between Ford and Arthur:

"You'd better be prepared for the jump into hyperspace. It's unpleasantly like being drunk."

"What's so unpleasant about being drunk?"

"You ask a glass of water."

And the plot, which tells how and why the Earth was created, why humanity is only the third most intelligent species on it, instead of (as is widely supposed) the second; and among other matters, the Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything.

But most of all what makes this book special is the little asides. Not just how to mix a Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster or the physics of the Improbability Drive. But, for example, details of the nest of the Damogran Frond Crested Eagle: "It was constructed largely of papier mache' and it was virtually impossible for a newly-hatched baby eagle to break out of it. The Damogran Frond Crested Eagle had heard of the notion of survival of the species but wanted no truck with it." Little gems like that dropped in as further proof that our galaxy is a crazy place.

The book adapts only the first four episodes of the six-part radio series, but the incomplete resolution won't bother you; the book moves so fast and funny you'll never notice. Imagine STAR WARS as if it had been written by P.G. Wodehouse, Monty Python and Gilbert & Sullivan. Better yet, don't try; read it.

#### THE INTEGRATED MAN

By Michael Berlyn  
Bantam, 1980, \$1.95

REVIEWED BY DEAN R. LAMBE

If you believe in very, very large scale integration, you'll believe this book: for the whole of Donald Sherman -- personality, behavior, ROM and RAM memory -- is on one integrated circuit chip (well,

actually four chips, four Shermans). Anybody with the appropriate neck receptacle becomes Sherman, and Sherman's microcircuit march through the galaxy is a mission of revenge.

When Sherman's parents die as a result of chip and receptacle slavery to the Morrison Mining Company, Sherman vows to kill Alex Morrison or at least put him out of business by killing planets-full of slave miners. Vladimir, one of the designers of the electronic slavery system, duplicates young Sherman and plugs him into his world-hopping quest. Vladimir, of course, has his own jealous reasons for terminating evil magnate Morrison. Meanwhile, back on Earth, William and Sandy Carter are suckered into Morrison's deadly mines and Morrison has his own problems with wife and mistress. Most of the action and characters come together on independent Lanta 2 and Morrison's Lanta 3 -- including the ultimate in coming together when Sherman plugs himself into both a male and a female body.

There are no real surprises and no great disappointments by close of this story; it's an adequate page-turner. You might sooner believe in peanut butter, and in Peter Pan, but if you believe in really large-scale integration ....

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#### THE MIND GAME

By Norman Spinrad  
Jove Books, 1980, 342 pp., \$2.50  
REVIEWED BY ALLEN VARNEY

Spinrad's new (and little publicized) mainstream novel is of marginal SF interest, since it deals with a pseudo-scientific pop cult based on Scientology, which has been called "science fiction religion". Spinrad's creativity would be more impressive were his books "Transformationalism" not so obviously a stand-in for Scientology and its founder not a duplicate of L. Ron Hubbard; but clearly this novel gains much of its power from its horrible resemblance to reality.

Jack and Anne Weller are a loving Hollywood couple who are abruptly separated when she is drawn into the clutches of Transformationalism. With his wife spirited away by the church to parts unknown, Jack pursues every course of action imaginable to regain her, but finally he has to play along and undergo Transformational "processing" himself. He plays a "mind game" with the Transformationalist movement to convince them his conversion is sincere while avoiding being "programmed". As he infiltrates further into the cult's organization, he almost loses sight of his original goal (to find Annie)

as his investigation becomes an end in itself.

As always with Spinrad's novels, it's easier for me to find reasons why I shouldn't have liked the book than reasons why I did. In THE MIND GAME the characters are two-dimensional -- though the Hubbard figure is imbued with a certain charisma despite his boozy, con-man approach -- and the prose includes occasional boners like "he had been too inside his own head to notice" (p. 19) and "bubbling alchemist laboratories" (p. 250). A major secondary character suddenly disappears without explanation 160 pages into the novel and the plot's single unbelievable coincidence is a dilly, as Jack stumbles upon a Transformationalist "Master Contact Sheet", potentially damaging to the movement, simply lying around on a desktop.

Yet these flaws, however serious, do not diminish the absorbing development of the novel. Weller is not strongly characterized, but he becomes an Everyman we sympathize with as he fights to retain his own thought processes while relentlessly bluffing his way up through the cult hierarchy. "Processing" is the key. Whether it's an entire culture being insidiously subverted (THE MEN IN THE JUNGLE, A WORLD BETWEEN) or a single character growing and changing despite himself (BUG JACK BARON, THE MIND GAME), Spinrad's books are entirely concerned with process. He chronicles, with absolute integrity and an unequalled sense of pace, the slow transformation that comes with (to borrow the title of his earlier mainstream novel) "passing through the flame".

THE MIND GAME, with its well-paced handling of powerful material, would make a terrific movie (with the Hubbard part played by Ed McMahon). As it stands, it's a very good book, well worth the time.

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#### THE FLUTE-PLAYER

By D.M. Thomas  
Picador: London: 1980  
156 pp., £1.75, paper

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM GIBSON

This is an extraordinarily fine fantasy novel, winner of the "Gollancz/Picador/Guardian Fantasy Competition", that will probably be read by only a handful of American "fantasy readers". I understand that an American edition is now out, although I haven't seen it.

Elena, the protagonist, lives in a country that might be Russia, or some Kafka-esque Germany, in a city made up of equal parts of Leningrad and Berlin. Elena's story is a harrowing fable of totalitarianism's necessary war on art, a story to some extent based on the lives of Mandelstam, Pasternak, Akhmatova and Tsytvetaya. This is a tremendously moving book set in one of the chilliest and most believable hells I've run across in fiction. A story of the survival of love and poetry in the shadow of the death camps.

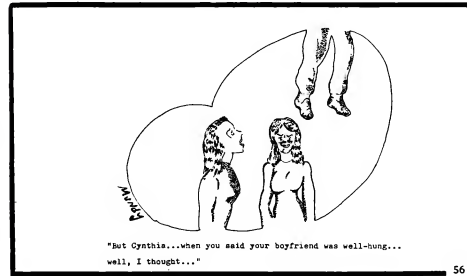
Sorry, no unicorns.

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#### PORT OF SAINTS

By William Burroughs  
Blue Wind Press: Berkeley: 1980  
174 pp., \$5.95, paper, \$15.95 cloth  
REVIEWED BY WILLIAM GIBSON

In spite of my considerable admiration for Mr. Burroughs' best work, I have to admit that I enjoyed this about as much as Darrell Schweitzer would. The book seems to have been assembled from out-takes of THE WILD BOYS, an earlier and better work. It bored me, and I'm a Burroughs fan from way back. Burroughs does a lot of things for



"But Cynthia...when you said your boyfriend was well-hung... well, I thought..."



small presses and Burroughs complete-  
ments are always hauling out these  
signed and numbered editions of  
things you just Can't Get; PORT OF  
SAINTS is a reprint of one or more  
of these from 1973.

It's impossible to understand  
the British "new wave" thing histor-  
ically without reading Burroughs.  
The man was a complete outsider (in  
more sense than one) who appropriat-  
ed the conventions of American mag-  
azine SF and tried to use them on  
Western consciousness like a rusty  
can-opener. But if you want to  
check him out, read NAKED LUNCH.

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#### HAUNTED

By Judith St. George  
Putnam, 1980, 158 pp., \$7.95  
Jacket by Judy Clifford  
0-399-20736-8

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

I don't usually care for Young  
Adult fiction that's overtly didac-  
tic, but HAUNTED is so well written  
that it's easy to overlook this.  
The novel puts a teenaged caretaker  
into a haunted house for a summer.  
The vividly-described setting, the  
puzzle of who the ghosts are and what  
they want, the excellent suspense of  
the attacks against Alex and the nat-  
urality of the characters more than  
make up for the unsuitable message  
about Accepting Responsibility.

Sixteen-year-old Alex Phillips  
is the son of a lawyer who's the cus-  
todian of a lavish but isolated Pen-  
sylvania estate. Red Roof Farm had  
been the property of an elderly cou-  
ple, the Von Dursts, who recently died  
in a suicide pact. Mr. Phillips has  
gotten his son and a colleague's son,  
an older college student, the job of  
keeping up the estate until the heirs  
claim it in a couple of months. Al-  
ex's conscious thoughts tell us that  
he's looking forward to proving by  
this summer job that he's not a child  
any more. However, his accompanying  
subconscious musings make it clear  
that he really is immature, eager  
for the perquisites of adulthood but  
unwilling to consider its responsi-  
bilities.

The story is uphill from here.  
Alex's initial glee at having the  
run of a luxurious manor is quickly  
shattered by an unexpected discovery.  
His reaction is to run home, but a  
desire to not look babyish brings  
him back. After all, he can stay  
out of the spooky part of the house  
until the more mature Bruce arrives  
and Alex can dump the problem on him.  
But Bruce turns out to be a totally  
irresponsible college jock and Alex  
unhappily realizes that it's up to  
him to shoulder or to publicly aban-

don the obligation he'd so lightheart-  
edly accepted.

The ghost story is a slowly-  
building thriller, alternating with  
scenes of adolescent social life as  
Bruce invites some local girls to  
the manor and makes plans to turn it  
into a swinging place for the summer.  
Why is Alex the only one afflicted  
by the supernatural presence? Why is  
the spirit careful to hide its mani-  
festations in seemingly-natural  
causes whenever anyone else is a-  
round? Why do these manifestations  
alternate between pleading summonses  
and murderous attacks? Alex reluct-  
antly acknowledges the parallel be-  
tween his refusal to face the super-  
natural problem and Bruce's refusal  
to carry his share of their mundane  
chores, and he accepts the final  
responsibility: finding out who the  
manor's previous owners had been and  
why they had really died. The reader  
will guess far sooner than Alex just  
what the Von Dursts had been, but it  
is a puzzle until just before the  
climactic confrontation as to why  
their spirits won't lie still and  
what their intentions are towards  
Alex.

HAUNTED is two stories skillful-  
ly interwoven. The supernatural  
mystery is successful on a fully ad-  
ult level, and the writing quality  
is of a considerably higher level  
than that found in many mainstream  
horror thrillers today. As a result,  
HAUNTED will be enjoyed by more ma-  
ture readers than the book's adoles-  
cent cast and educational alternate  
theme would indicate. It's worth  
crossing into the Young Adult sec-  
tion of your library to pick it up.

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#### RATNER'S STAR

By Don DeLillo  
Vintage: New York: 1980  
438 pp., \$3.95, paper

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM GIBSON

For my money, this is a turkey.  
And I'm supposed to like this stuff.  
Someone, probably John Clute, had  
said somewhere in print that this  
was one of those borderline SF nov-  
els that make the run of the genre  
look silly. Oh, boy, I said, and  
rubbed my hands together. What I  
got, when Vintage reprinted the 1976  
hardcover, is a kind of long dry  
shuffle through a series of turns  
that owe a lot to Pynchon and Von-  
negut. The writing is good, some-  
times brilliant, and parts of the  
book are quite funny. (I laughed  
out loud a total of three times,  
though, and when I first read GRAV-  
ITY'S RAINBOW I fell out of bed

laughing three times before I'd fin-  
ished the first hundred pages.)

Billy Walling, fourteen-year-  
old Nobel Laureate and inventor of  
Zorg theory, is called upon to de-  
cipher the first message from space.  
Good start, but after 438 pages I  
was expecting a little more in the  
way of endings. And I read IHALGREEN  
three times with increasing pleasure,  
so as far as most of you are concern-  
ed, I have the literary equivalent  
of a cast-iron stomach.

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#### THOUSANDSTAR

By Piers Anthony  
Avon 75556; c. 1980; 294 pp., \$2.25  
First printing, June, 1980

REVIEWED BY STEVE LEWIS

The fertile imagination of Mr.  
Anthony seems to know no bounds.  
How many other writers could take  
an old kids' game like Scissors-Pa-  
per-Stone, and make a grand-quest  
science fiction novel out of it?  
You know how it goes, don't you?  
Scissors cuts Paper, Paper covers  
Stone, Stone blunts Scissors. There  
is another version known as Man-Chick-  
en-Worm. Man eats Chicken eats Worm  
eats ....

Galactic Segment Thousandstar is  
having a competition. The host bod-  
ies are being provided by the cohab-  
itants of the nearest planet to the  
goal: the Hydros, who can beat the  
Erbs, who in turn can beat a Squam,  
who can beat a Hydro. Heem of High-  
falls is a Hydro -- sort of an intel-  
ligent water balloon -- and it is  
his bad luck that the transferee to  
his mind is illegal, a female Solar-  
ian. Not only that, but transfers  
between members of opposite sexes  
are generally considered impossible.

Well, of course they fall in  
love. Wholly platonically, it goes  
without saying. The competition  
they face consists of three parts:  
the intellectual challenge, the pil-  
oting challenge and the physical  
challenge. Heem learns a lot about  
himself, including the details of  
his species' reproduction ritual, a  
secret so sinister that all the other  
adults of his kind are afflicted  
with a sort of racial amnesia.

The competition itself turns out  
to be of the non-zero-sum variety,  
mathematical jargon for a game in  
which cooperation is suggested if  
not required. And thus a meaningful  
part of the gap between Alien xeno-  
phobias is bridged. The book's a  
must for game-players of all persua-  
sions, theoretical as well as role-  
playing, or for anyone for that mat-  
ter who just plain likes a rollick-  
ing good space quest.

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## WORLD ENOUGH, AND TIME

By James Kahn

Del Rey/Ballantine, 1980, \$2.25

REVIEWED BY DEAN R. LAMBE

This novel was a learning experience -- for the writer; all the reader learns is the value of two and a quarter clams. The Homeric quest herein -- labeled SF, yet scarce fantasy -- begins three centuries hence, when one of the last Humans, Joshua, and his Centaur friend, Beauty, discover that their brides have been kidnapped and their northern California homesteads are in ruins. The villains of the piece, a Vampire, a Griffin and an Accident, are all products of decadent 21st Century genetic engineering, and evil Vampires are enslaving Humans for nefarious research in a southern "City with No Name". In their search for vengeance and lost loves, Josh and horse's-ass Beauty are soon joined by cyborg Jasmine, a semi-bright Cat, and the odd butterfly, as they wander through war -- and earthquake-scarred lands. Bears, unicorns, elves, hobbits survive, non-were-wolves and dragons are but a few of the smart Animals and mythological beasts who hinder and help the seekers of truth and justice, although the mad DNA twisters were apparently all WASPs, for no non-Western legendary creatures appear.

Narrative and dialogue gradually become competent by the "what does it all mean, really?" end. Metaphors are not mixed, but miscigenated -- which while now legal in Virginia, is still painful in prose. If Dr. Kahn really knows fencing, he learned while writing, for Jasmine's epee is called saber and used as machete and broadsword before any reasonable duel occurs. Even California is hardly world enough and 300 years falls short in time for all this silly scientific nonsense. The credulous and gullible are invited to follow more of this "all but the kitchen sink" plotting in the sequels to this first of a trilogy.

### MIRROR FRIEND, MIRROR FOE

By George Takei and Robert Asprin  
Playboy Press, 1979, 223 pp., \$1.95  
Cover by Ken Barr.  
0-872-16581-7.

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

American popular culture's horizons have expanded in recent years. Today's SF light adventure is often thinly-disguised melodrama of a more exotic sort than the Westerns of yore. MIRROR FRIEND, MIRROR FOE is standard space opera but it not only features an Oriental hero, it con-

tains a plot thread that will be familiar to fans of Oriental martial-arts movies.

Hosato is a free-lance troubleshooter in a 23rd-Century galactic civilization. He is hired for industrial sabotage against one of the two rival robot-manufacturing corporations on a mineral-rich but uninhabitable planet. McCrae Enterprises is a large, environmentally-sealed complex guarded by an elaborate mechanical surveillance system (controlled by Asimovian positronic brains) and an intelligent human security staff. Hosato's plan is to get hired under a cover identity, and once inside McCrae to find some means to destroy the complex and escape before Security penetrates his disguise. What he finds at McCrae, however, thrusts the novel's first plot completely into the background and sends the story in an unexpected direction. A third plot soon appears, which does not supplant the other two here but seems intended to become the main focus of an obviously-intended sequel.

Although MIRROR FRIEND, MIRROR FOE will never be called Significant SF, it's admirably skillful in its mingling of three separate stock plots. Also to its credit is its authors' determination to keep everything on an intelligent level. The characters are clever and most of them are likeable, which keeps the reader guessing whether any of them will really be killed off or not. The motivation is plausible -- except for the climactic battle, which just isn't convincing despite a contrived attempt to justify it. (But Hosato's predicament is desperate enough that most readers will overlook the implausible motivation.) Finally, the novel ends with an emotionally-satisfying conclusion that nevertheless leaves the reader anxious to pick up the sequel to find out what happens next.

I don't know how much of MIRROR FRIEND, MIRROR FOE is due to George Takei (Hosato certainly reflects a lot of his Mr. Sulu persona) and how much to Robert Asprin, but the combination is a success. I hope this writing partnership stays together for many more books.

### THE LURE OF THE BASILISK

By Lawrence Watt-Evans  
Ballantine/Del Rey 28624; c. 1980;  
First Edn., March '80; 195pp., \$1.95

REVIEWED BY STEVE LEWIS

This is a quest novel, pure and simple, taking place on a world that

is inhabited by humans, but which may or may not actually be Earth. There arises the distinct impression that civilization on this planet has been stagnating for some time, but that may only be due to the fact that the village of Skelleth, where the action begins, marks one of mankind's outermost limits.

Beyond, to the north, lies the realm of the overmen, to which superior race is Garth a member. It is Garth's mission, based on the sayings of oracles, to capture a basilisk, a fearsome creature of nearly invincible powers. Overmen are definitely stronger and more powerful than ordinary men, but any further degree of superiority is not quite so evident when it comes to intelligence.

It is said that one glance at the basilisk, which dwells in the ancient crypts beneath Mmoreth, will turn a man or overman immediately to stone. This is no mere legend. Garth must not only capture it but he must also return it alive to Skelleth, where the Forgotten King awaits them both.

Garth's mission is one of vanity. His desire is that his name be remembered until the end of time. At book's end he has begun to wonder (finally) if the price is worth it, and yet in nicely understated fashion, he has learned a way in which he may yet succeed.

And with that, somehow the singularly simple-minded plot of this eminently likable adventure fantasy seems suddenly to expand to fulfill all the requirements of a full-fledged novel.

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# HOMEWORLD

By Harry Harrison  
Bantam, 1980, 199 pp., \$1.95  
0-553-13917-7.

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

I don't know which SF writer first came up with the naive young aristocratic hero who joins a revolutionary movement to overthrow his futuristic oligarchy and restore global social equality. But Harrison's *HOMEWORLD* is one of the best examples of this plot that I've read.

Engineer Jan Kulozik is a British member of the technocratic elite that keeps resource-depleted 23rd-Century Earth running. He accepts his upperclass luxuries as their just due for keeping the dull-witted, dole-supported masses alive. Jan is vacationing in the Red Sea when his yacht is sunk and he is picked up by a mysterious submarine. Jan learns things that are totally incompatible with the world-picture he has been taught, and he becomes aware that the masses are neither as unintelligent nor as grateful to their masters as he'd thought. A beautiful member of the underground takes him on an eye-opening trip among the lower classes, and ... you can take it from there.

But as it's often been said, there are few new ideas in SF; what makes a particular story readable is how well it's retold. *HOMEWORLD* is told very well indeed. Harrison has constructed a grim but plausible future. Jan begins as an unattractively-spoiled brat whose initial motivation for interest in the underground is less of altruism than of resentment at having been duped all his life by Government Security. He shows egotistic glee at pitting his computer talents against Security's all-pervasive surveillance network. Only gradually does Jan become a concerned and likeable individual. Fans of human interest will appreciate this character development. The engineering aspects of 23rd-Century society will interest the mechanically minded, and Jan's adventures into espionage will thrill fans of secret-agent action.

WELL, IT WASN'T FRAGGING, EXACTLY,  
OFFICER... SOMEONE THREW A BOX OF  
PRUNES WITH A  
VULGAR MENO-  
RANDOM ATTACKING  
INTO MY OUTER  
OFFICE.



The cover announces that *HOMEWORLD* is the first volume of a trilogy, so be warned that it has a cliffhanger ending. In fact, since I dislike reading serials before they are finished, I hadn't intended to read *HOMEWORLD* this soon. I just glanced at the first few pages and I couldn't stop reading ...

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## SHADOWMAN

By George W. Proctor  
Fawcett Gold Medal, 254 pp., \$1.95  
1-4350-3; c. 1980; 1st printing,  
June, 1980

REVIEWED BY STEVE LEWIS

It begins with an assassination attempt, to prevent the independence of a planet where violence is unknown. Not only that, but as an experimental world controlled by the ruling Zivon Company's strict psychological screenings, it is a planet where death by violence is utterly inconceivable.

The target is Jonal Cassell. He is head of the Autonomy Party on Tula and he wakes up from the attack on his life with a voice in his head. And with some urgency the voice is encouraging the desire for counter-violence that he seems to have been secretly nursing into him.

There are two essentially similar sorts of science fiction story that all this brings to mind. First, of course, the rough-riding pulpish days of *THRILLING WONDER STORIES*, say. Secondly, and of slightly more recent vintage, what this reads exactly like is the second half of one of your better Ace Doubles. SF fans with long memories or large collections will know exactly what I mean.

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## THE PURPLE PTERODACTYLS

By L. Sprague de Camp  
Ace, April 1980, \$2.25

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL VERNON MACKAY

De Camp's latest is a collection of tales about one Willy Newbury, a middle-aged banker with an affinity for the occult. It is typical de Camp. Each story is professionally crafted. Several, like the title story, "Balsamo's Mirror", "United Imp" and "Darius" are superb. Another third are good professional stories, but lacking in either ideas or inspiration. The final third, like "The Figurine", "Priapus" and "A Sending of Serpents" are hackneyed by their hoary conception of youth.

Most stories, however, are entertaining, filled with de Camp's characteristic light humor. They

are not very emotionally involving -- Willy Newbury is little affected by what happens to him, and the reader is no different.

If you're a fan of de Camp's or if you've read and enjoyed a Willy Newbury story and you can suspend your disbelief in the occult -- then this prescription is for you: "To be taken in small doses (one or two stories) just before bedtime".

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## INCREDIBLE COINCIDENCE

By Alan Vaughan  
New American Library, \$2.25  
247 pp., 1980

REVIEWED BY JOHN DIPRETE

Aside from the fact this collection brings together in one place more staggering accounts of synchronicity than any volume of its type, part of the book's major interest lies in its "between-the-lines" material which the author, Alan Vaughan, generously provides. Previously editor of *PSYCHIC* magazine (now titled *NPW REALITIES*), Vaughan discloses behind-the-scenes glimpses of his life -- a world of psi conventions, exciting talents, magazine editors, over-the-globe trips and -- incredible coincidence. Along the way, Mr. Vaughan emerges as a serious, witty Scholar of Psi, pursuing a charged, unusual career. The reader, out of envy, wishes he, too, could become a writer and researcher of the bizarre.

Accounts of synchronicity (Jung's term for "meaningful coincidence") cover diverse categories: the woman who finds the man of her dreams (precognition? telepathy?); the author (Vaughan) who finds lost proof sheets turn up on a park bench after missing three years (ESP? clairvoyance?); a collision between two motorists, Ian Purvis and Ian Purvis (accident? mere coincidence?); and many other occurrences.

Synchronicity, according to Jung, is an "acausal" connecting principle, equal in importance to the day-to-day causality found in physics, biology and natural science. Indeed, claim proponents such as Vaughan and others (most notably David Bohm, an eminent physicist), synchronicity may be the Prime Factor behind all psi phenomena -- ESP, clairvoyance, precognition, etc. Not surprisingly, Bohm is working on a model of the universe (one Vaughan approves of) stating that "consciousness creates space, time and matter ... (that) ... cause and effect are illusion".

A fine collection of entertaining -- and useful -- coincidences.

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## THE GAME OF LIFE

By Timothy Leary  
Peace Press, 3828 Willat Avenue,  
Culver City, CA 90230  
Paperback, 8 1/4 X 11, 294 pp., \$8.95  
REVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

Timothy Leary is an idea man who sometimes writes fact and sometimes writes fiction but usually manages to entertain, stimulate and amuse regardless of the format he uses. THE GAME OF LIFE is the fifth volume of a series unfortunately titled "Future History", and while it isn't science fiction, there is enough pseudo-science and extrapolation here to satisfy all but the most minding senses of wonder.

Although Leary uses the ancient Tarot deck of cards as a framework to erect his theory, GAME is not an occult or parapsych book any more than it is SF or fantasy. What it is, really, is Leary's head-trip writ large, the summation of everything he's been writing about most of his career. And just as he once used the TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD and the TAO TE CHING to dramatize and illuminate the psychedelic experience of the 1960s, so now he has dramatized and illuminated his SMILE scenario (Space Migration, Intelligence Increase, Life Extension) by clever use of the Tarot deck.

Actually, it's only the 22 trump cards (the so-called major armana) that are used anyway -- those mysterious, provocative figures such as The Fool, The Wheel of Fortune, The Devil and Strength, which seem to be archetypal calling cards direct from the Collective Unconscious. The Leary theory of evolution and destiny is based on the idea that our DNA program moves through 24 separate stages (we're now completing number 12, by the way) and it is to illustrate this neuro-biochemical blueprint that the Mad Doktor uses the 22 trumps -- plus two of his own devising. Illustrated the whole thing is -- with a great variety of charts and graphs, cartoons, photos, simplified outlines of the famous Rider-Waite Tarot deck and especially fine psychedelic drawings by Pete von Sholly, who should really be appreciated by SF fans.

The biggest problem with GAME and with the series in general, is Leary's excessive repetition, which is partly inevitable due to the nature of the 24 recapitulating stages and partly a deliberate technique designed to brainwash the reader -- Leary is a master psychologist, after all. Fortunately, Leary never loses his sense of humor and never runs the risk of becoming another L. Ron Hubbard or Wilhelm Reich. A

group project, really, with several contributions by Robert Anton Wilson and a whole staff kicking around ideas and graphics, GAME is the best of Leary's lunacies -- a whole zoo of funny ideas by one of the funniest idea men yet.

## MEDUSA'S CHILDREN

By Bob Shaw  
Dell, \$1.95

REVIEWED BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

This book has an unusual taste to it. It reads as if it were the second part of a trilogy. Backgrounds characters and several major discoveries were introduced in such an off-hand manner that I began to feel like somebody had dropped me into the second or third act, where it is presumed the audience understands all that went before so events don't have to be explained in the same fashion as in the first act.

The plotline focuses on the inhabitants of a bizarre water world and the awesome power controlling the waterworld. A power that is intent on conquering Earth. The plot also involves Hal Tarrant, an algae farmer, in a near-future Earth.

So far so good, but then just as the story is unfolding and the events are grinding towards a tremendous conclusion -- the book ends. I was left wanting more, much more.

But what is in the book is excellent, full of the verve, color, pace and original ideas that are Mr. Shaw's forte. Even with its flaws MEDUSA'S CHILDREN is a charming and at times exciting book.

## THE MAN WHO CORRUPTED EARTH

By G.C. Edmondson  
Ace Books, 1980, 312 pp., \$2.25

REVIEWED BY KEITH SOLTYS

One of the staple plots of pulp writers was a variant on the mad scientist idea -- the mad millionaire. Your friendly entrepreneur would mortgage his empire (and maybe his soul) to be the first into space. Heinlein's THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON is probably the best example of this type of story.

Things haven't worked out like that but old ideas die hard. THE MAN WHO CORRUPTED EARTH takes this idea and places it in a modern setting.

Gus Dampier has made his millions in the aviation industry and sees expansion into space as the

next logical step. But times are hard for the priests of high technology. Nader's Raiders held him back when pollution was the big problem and as soon as he has that solved fuel economy turns out to be the next hurdle.

But the Arabs are looking for something to do with all those petrobillions. With their backing Gus scrounges three used shuttles and sends them out to the asteroid belt to bring back a nice nickle-iron asteroid.

Of course it doesn't turn out to be that simple. Gus' son wants his company and his friendly Arab baker is suspected of plotting a coup against his brother. The astronauts find that their muscles don't work so well after a few months in zero-g. Finally, their nickle-iron asteroid turns out to be more than they bargained for.

Despite a more than usually complicated plot, Edmondson brings things to a tidy resolution. His characters are oddball enough to be interesting and the plot moves along smoothly. I don't know whether events could actually happen like this but he left me wishing that they could.

## THE REVOLVING BOY

By Gertrude Friedberg  
Del Rey, \$1.95  
1980 (reissue), 184 pages

REVIEWED BY JOHN DIPRETE

This Del Rey reissue of a 1966 hardback by a rather obscure author is surprisingly good, despite its obvious juvenile packaging. The simple plot concerns Derv, a young boy who likes to twist and turn, due to his origins in space. At school Derv's peers call him "the boy who whirlls"; but for what reason -- ahhh!

At first Derv goes through several childish stunts or compulsions of daily revolutions; later he matures to somersaults and complicated "free fall" gymnastics. He does this to "get right" ... to feel better.

It's a good split-level yarn appealing to both young and adult readers. Scientific entanglements (out of place in this particular narrative) bog the story down slightly in the middle, and in Part Two events are upset by a radical passage of time. But incidents pick up thereafter, and suspense heightens.

The story is a pleasure to read, having funny, breezy, well-told prose and likeable, if not-too-deep characters. THE REVOLVING BOY won't turn your stomach.

# 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 II

The book industry is in big trouble, although in my last column I reported sales figures up 20%. Those figures, disputed by several knowledgeable sources, and other evidence seems to indicate that sales declined markedly in 1980 as did the number of titles published. How much less won't be known until PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY finishes its tally, several months from now. (As soon as the results are known, I'll report them here.) The publishing industry appears to be finding out the hard way that books are, at long last no longer recession-proof. Up until now every time the economy went through a rough period, be it one-dip, double-dip, mini or maxi-recession, the book industry as a whole wasn't affected. But with prices for hardcovers tripling in the past decade, and quadrupling for paperbacks, customers could no longer buy in quantity, and with the economy pinching the budget, they could no longer buy on impulse.

It gets worse. A Field News Service report mentions that "as shoppers found keeping slow-moving books ... intolerably expensive, returns of unsold books to publishers shot up. Ever-increasing shipping charges" especially for hardcovers "added to the burden ..." Another problem especially at the mass market paperback houses, is what the Field Service report called the "blackbuster mentality" which results in the houses putting "all

their financial eggs into what they hoped would be fast-moving superbestsellers". Sales were horrible and many houses suffered major losses, "leaving even less money for the houses to buy paperback rights to ... clothbound books". Without the lucrative money from the paperback rights, cloth publishers tried a variety of ways to save money, but raising prices and using cheaper paper and shoddy bindings probably cost them sales. Finally in the last year, with no options left, many publishers cut the number of titles issued and reduced their staffs. (In the last decade New York publishing has lost 22% of its workers.) A few publishers tried more questionable practices, holding onto authors' royalties (see story later in this column), indulging in "creative" bookkeeping and as editorial and publicity staff began to be reduced, vicious in-fighting resulted.

Why, if sales were declining and financial resources were tight, did some paperback publishers adopt such a high-risk policy as investing large amounts of money in a few titles?

Why not spend the same amount on a greater number of titles? The answer might be that the "blackbuster mentality" is (according to the F.N.S. report) "brought on by the bottom line psychology of conglomerate ownership". Norman Spinrad, President of the SFWA, writing in the October 1980 issue of LOCUS, puts a finer point on it: "I have more than once pointed out that the publishing industry is being gobbled up by entertainment conglomerates. Now we begin to see the results. In the TV game, better than 90% of all projected series are expensive flops ... the remaining 10% generate the profits. We are now dealing with the same corporations, hence the same corporate mentality. Expectation of a high rate of failure. Unwillingness therefore to invest the energy and money necessary to make each book count".

Others in the industry think that because of layoffs and cutbacks in personnel, executives are too frightened to change. One source who requested her name not be used said, "A recession has never happened in the business before, most have no idea how to deal with the situation, what to change to make the financial returns move towards the old 15% growth each year; a lot of people just freeze up ... everywhere you look there is panic just under the surface".

As if things weren't bad enough already the Internal Revenue Service ruled as the result of a recent Supreme Court decision, that businesses cannot reduce the values of their inventories for tax purposes. This will result in titles going out of print sooner, smaller print runs forcing another increase in book prices as make publishers even more reluctant to publish books that might be perceived as being non-commercial, meaning less variety and an even greater reliance on "blackbusters". The irony is that the Supreme Court case had nothing to do with publish-

LOOK, LADY,  
FINANCIAL  
ANALYSIS  
ISN'T MY  
THING.



WHATS THE MATTER?  
DID YOUR WARRANTY  
EXPIRE?



ing; it was concerned with warehouse inventory write-offs from tool companies, automobile spare parts, etc. Senator Moinihan is introducing legislation in the 97th Congress to exempt publishers from the ruling. Regardless of what happens, this has created one more headache for an industry already beset with numerous migraines.

How about science fiction? What does all this doom-and-gloom talk signal for a publishing genre that, with the exception of the last five years, has been considered peripheral at best?

Well, science fiction appears to be faring better than the industry as a whole, but it is still beset with problems. Dell and Berkley have cut the number of titles issued per month and several other lines are expected to follow suit. Not everybody is retreating. Ace Books which was the first to cut back, from ten titles a month to about eight, has no plans to reduce their line further. Bantam and Avon have not been buying until recently, but neither has plans to cut back. Del Rey and DAW are holding firm, at six and five titles respectively per month. DAW Publisher, Donald Wollheim told me that the recession has "not affected us ... we're doing very well".

Some companies which had no regular lines are now entering the field about a monthly basis. Playboy started about a year ago and Warner is currently buying (see article in Book News), although the first titles in their program will not start appearing until this fall. Pocket Books has recently expanded to five titles a month. TOR Books, the new company started by former Ace Books Vice President, Thomas Doherty, will release two titles per month under the editorship of James Baen.

What does all this mean? Well, it dictates a period of retrenchment for the publishing industry as they try to figure ways to renovate an industry plagued by an inefficient outmoded distribution system, rising costs and an unsure general economy. For the SF genre it indicates slightly fewer titles, smaller advances and increasing encroachments on authors' rights. This is not the time for a novice writer to consider SF writing as a full-time occupation, nor if she or he wants to eat that is. Fewer first novels will be purchased, first and second novelists are going to find more resistance in selling upcoming works and the more visible names in the field may have to stifle their pride and take advances significantly less than their last few novels commanded. In fact, some writers may have to take "mundane" jobs to make the rent. But the

average reader probably won't notice any major changes, other than fewer gaudy SF art and history books.

But, cheer up, things could be worse; this isn't the automobile industry, and you're not an executive for Chrysler. Are you?

## # ORYCON 1980

On November 14-16 1980, at the downtown Hilton in Portland, Oregon, over a thousand people attended the second Orycon. Guests included Paul Anderson, Duane Ackerson, Jean Auel, Mildred Downey Broxon, Ed Bryant, Richard E. Geis, George Guthridge, Norman E. Hartman, Dean Ing, Richard Kearns, Ursula K. LeGuin, Elizabeth A. Lynn, George R.R. Martin, Vonda N. McIntyre, R. Faraday Nelson, Steve Perry, Sue Petrey, Paul Preuss, Marta Randall, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, John Varley, M.K. Wren (alias Martha Kay Renfro) and many more. Fritz Leiber was the Guest of Honor, F.M. Busby was the Toastmaster and I was the Fan Guest of Honor.

The people were friendly, the con committee was fantastic and very helpful and I had a marvelous time. Thank you to all the nice individuals who complimented me on my column; I appreciate your comments very much.

I talked to many of the authors who were present and did my journalistic duties. The following are from my notes, so those of you to whom I talked at the convention, if you're omitted or I've made an error, please write me. Although I am a teetotaler, it is my fervent belief that the air in a convention hotel is intoxicating, and a couple of minutes of breathing it has effects not too unlike alcohol.

M.K. Wren has sold the PHOENIX trilogy to Berkley for \$45,000.00. Book I in the series, THE SWORD OF THE LAMB, will be out in February. The second and third books are tentatively set for June and October of this year.

In April Doubleday will print the fifth novel, A SEASON OF DEATH, in her mystery series featuring a bookstore owner, Conan Flagg, who lives in a fictitious town on the Oregon Coast and dabbles as a detective.

Ed Bryant is working on a novel for Pocket and also has a story collection, PARTICLE THEORY, in preparation.

George R.R. Martin has a book coming out in March from Simon & Schuster/Pocket. February will see the publication of BINARY STAR #5, which contains an expanded version of his novella, "Nightflyers". He

I FOUND THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES VERY USEFUL...  
I LEARNED HOW TO DO THE OLD SHELL GAME UNDER CHAMPAGNE GLASSES!



has sold a novel to Pocket, FEVRE DREAM, which will be marketed as a mainstream book. His Hugo-and-Nebraska-Award-winning novelette, "Sandkings" has been optioned for the cinema.

The convention also featured a three-way intercontinental hookup with Arthur C. Clarke in Sri Lanka, Fritz Leiber at the convention and Harlan Ellison in Sherman Oaks, California. In a wide-ranging conversation, Clarke, Leiber and Ellison talked about the future, Harlan slamming fundamentalists like the "Moral Majority" and the conservative political trend in general; he also gloated over the fact that he was one of the few authors whose works weren't out-dated by the Voyager flyby of Saturn. He also marveled over the braided "T" Ring, while Clarke mentioned how much he enjoyed living in Sri Lanka, and how he never intended to write again, at which point Ellison asked him if he'd like to write a story for THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS. Clarke mentioned the potentialities of computer microminiaturization; they commiserated over publishers, with Ellison revealing he is going to sue Harper & Row because they allowed Dell to have ads for SF books in the back of the latest softcover edition of DEATHBIRD STORIES.

There was an audience of several hundred people listening, and at one point hats were passed around to pay for an extra fifteen minutes of conversation.

Joe Scanlon has sold an SF porn novel to Hustler Paperbacks, titled UP URANUS.



# Paul Pruess has a new novel out in February from Bantam, titled RE-ENTRY. The novel takes place in a large accelerator. Mr. Pruess has produced many educational films and has been editor and associate producer of several network TV entertainment specials.

# Fritz Leiber has sold a novella to Terry Carr's original anthology series, UNIVERSE. He is working on a Lovecraftian/Cthulhu Mythos novella, "Terror From the Depths", is writing the sequel to "Blue Grass" and is working on another Change War story.

# Jon Gustafson has a fiction (non-SF) novel at Avon.

# Marta Randall is working on a fantasy novel for Dell. She is editing the NEW DIMENSION's original anthology series with Robert Silverberg; number 12 will be out from Pocket sometime this year. NEW DIMENSIONS is not open for stories at this time.

# Elizabeth A. Lynn is writing a children's book, SILVER HORSE, with Jeanne Gamoll. She is doing a novel, THE SARDONX NET, for Berkley-Putnam. And from Pocket early in 1982, is KYRIE OF THE WOLVES, illustrated by Alicia Austin.

# Dean Ing has two story collections coming from Ace Books. This info from the Orycon program booklet.

# Jean Auel is working on the second novel of the Earth's Children series. The first book, her first novel, CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR, was recently on the NEW YORK TIMES best-seller list for several weeks.

# William Gibson has just sold a story to OMNI.

# Steve Perry is working on his fifth novel, THE HANSEN VARIATION. His first, THE TULAREMIA GAMBIT, will be out in May from Fawcett.

# Oscar Rossiter has finished a new novel, THE A.C. SCROLLS.

# F.M. Busby has completed a sequel to RISSA KERGUELEN, titled THE ALIEN DEBT. Another novel set in the same universe, Tregare, THE PIRATE YEARS, is in planning. Others out to market or under way include a suspense novel, AND IT COMES OUT HERE, another novel, SLOW FREIGHT TO FOREVER and a story collection, WORLDS IN MY MIND.

#### # MAGAZINE NEWS

GALAXY and GALILEO have folded; both magazines were published by Vincent McCaffrey, who also owns Avenue Victor Hugo Bookstore. McCaffrey's

third publication, SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, a monthly SF news publication, has been sold to Andrew Adams Whyte. Whyte wrote a book review column for GALILEO and later for SCIENCE FICTION TIMES. Avenue Victor Hugo, McCaffrey's parent company will continue to publish it.

McCaffrey's first major publication was FICTION, a little magazine that foundered when it printed an extra four thousand copies for promotion. GALILEO's first issue, published at about the time FICTION went under, had a print run of 8,000 -- 1,500 were sent to FICTION subscribers and the rest sold out quickly. Encouraged by this McCaffrey sent out nearly 1 million promotional pieces to various lists, creating huge growth, and by the third year, there were over 57,000 subscribers. Most were cut-rate Publishers Clearing House type, where little money is made unless the subscriber renews directly. The mailings cost considerable money, creating cash-flow problems. They tried several computer labeling firms, but had problems getting out copies and renewal notices, which cut into the subscription list substantially.

They did succeed in getting Dell Distributing to supply newsstand services. The deal was: Dell would furnish them with \$38,000 an issue as an advance against 40% sales of 110,000 copies. When combined with the remaining subscriptions it added up to over 150,000 copies to produce and mail. Sales were worse than projected, coming to around 20%. GALILEO owed Dell \$55,000 and Dell wanted to reduce the advance to 10%, whereupon McCaffrey pulled GALILEO out of newsstand distribution.

In the meantime, McCaffrey was buying GALAXY magazine, with its numerous debts chronicled all too often in this column (it still owes Frederik Pohl over \$800 for example). The final deal was made weeks before the Dell deal fell through. Now McCaffrey was stuck with two magazines on his hands, with a combined debt at present of over \$150,000. They published one issue of GALAXY, but didn't even have enough money to mail it to subscribers. The cash-flow problems finally swamped SF TIMES, which stopped publication in June. Bowing to the inevitable, McCaffrey announced suspension of GALILEO and GALAXY and the sale of the SF TIMES, in the late fall of 1980. GALILEO's last issue was published in November of 1979. GALAXY's abortive issue was published in July.

In a letter mailed on October 18, 1980 to writers with work accepted for publication in GALAXY, Editor Floyd Kemske foreshadowed the imminent: "The cash situation has de-

teriorated. There just isn't any money here beyond what is required to keep our creditors from closing us down. Indeed, there might even be some question about that. We are putting together the October issue with the knowledge that it might never see print".

ANALOG and ASIMOV'S remain on their four-a-week schedule. FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION and OMNI are monthly. AMAZING and ARES appear bi-monthly. DESTINIES is winding down with two or three issues left (depending on when you read this). THE BERKLEY SF SHOWCASE comes out three times a year.

A new magazine is planned for an April-dated, February-released magazine, THE TWILIGHT ZONE, published by Gallery.

#### DIED: DORIS PITKIN BUCK

She was 82 when she died of a pulmonary embolism. Many of her stories were published in F&SF.

She also wrote poetry, and newspaper and magazine articles on travel and gardening, and, with her husband, Richard, on remodeling and landscaping.

Mrs. Buck graduated from Bryn Mawr College and had a masters degree from Columbia University. She had taught English at Ohio State University. She was also an actress. She was a member of the SPWA. She died on or about December 7th, 1980.

#### # ROYALTIES

It has been brought to my attention that several authors have lodged complaints against certain publishers, claiming that the publishers were tardy in reporting royalties. Several sources have claimed it is common practice among various houses to hold an author's royalty check and or statement for an extra six months beyond the contractual agreement, maintaining that the houses profit by cashing in the interest. The SPWA's attorney, Alex Berman, wrote a letter in the August 1980 SPWA FORUM outlining the situation. At Noreascon SPWA business meeting, David Hartwell and Donald Wollheim presented the publishers' side of the issue, and Alex Berman reported about the situation to the members present.

I talked to both Mr. Berman and Mr. Wollheim about this matter re-

cently by telephone. They present diametrically opposing viewpoints on practically every aspect of the situation. First, the matter of withholding royalties: Mr. Berman reports that it is an "industry-wide phenomenon" that has been "going on for a long time". Mr. Wollheim says that it is a "matter of not comprehending how publishers work"; he went on to mention that with the recession publishers are "tight with money ... like any other damn business".

Then there is the question of publishers holding onto royalties for an extra six months: Mr. Wollheim says that it doesn't make sense for a publisher to hold an author's royalty check for six months because there would be "no interest" gained, as most publishers hold royalty monies "on business accounts" or checking accounts. Mr. Berman reports that many publishers are "paying late, reporting late" and when the statement does arrive it is oftentimes inaccurate". And Berman went on to say that "it's a serious problem", that a "lot of money" is involved and "not only in SF" but across the industry.

What has caused the problem? Mr. Berman maintains it is the result of the "conglomerates ... mass media", the "Hollywood mentality of work for hire ... a flat fee and that's it". Wollheim responds that this is always an "area of confusion", that the authors "always feel that the publisher is conning them". He went on to mention that a lot of publishers are "all scraped for dough" because the recession causes book stores to go out of business or not pay distributors, who then turn around and do not pay the publisher". He mentioned that the cash-flow is so slow that the publishers are so "strapped for money around royalty time" that banks advertise in PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY, offering loans to help the publishers out. He went on to say that, many times "authors feel publishers should take all the risks", when it is "actually a partnership" and that "paranoia" about publishers is "standard procedure". He also said that a lot of authors think that because some publishers are shoddy, all of them "are dishonest -- one bad apple and everybody gets a bum reputation".

What is happening right now? Mr. Berman says that "major battlelines are being drawn" but that there's "nothing concrete as of this time, but the SFPA has formed a committee" to look into the matter and that the committee will make a report "by April at the business meeting". I asked him about possible courses of action and he replied that the SFPA could "confront certain publishers" and that one option under "contempla-

tion is a potential lawsuit".

And what could be done to help the problem? Mr. Wollheim said that a lot of authors have the "wrong attitude" towards the industry, that authors and publishers are "not competing, but complementary" and that while he can "understand the authors' point of view" and that they are in the "same tight bind", however, when it comes to the money, in the "last analysis, for the author it is two months, for the publisher it is a life investment".

Mr. Berman says two things could be done to alleviate the problem: (1) "Fix up the contracts -- pay on time, or penalties", and (2) "Live up to current contracts -- specific accounting of the number of books printed".

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# F. Paul Wilson has sold a novel, THE KEEP, to Morrow for \$50,000 with a graduated division of the paperback money, favorable to Mr. Wilson, once the softcover rights are sold. He spent 14 months writing it -- the novel was acquired for the cinema in advance of book publication, with the rights going to CBS Theatrical Films. It will be produced by Gene Kirkwood and Howard Koch, Jr.; the contract calls for a two-year option at \$100,000 against a \$200,000 purchase price. Wilson will also get \$50,000 in deferred compensation from first profits, a possible \$50,000 in bonuses based on best-seller performance and 5% of the film's net profits. The rights to Morrow were sold in a hardcover auction after the deal with CBS.

The novel tells of Nazis in Rumania confronted by a vampire released from a vault after a 600-year incarceration. Wilson mentioned in a letter that "The nice thing about THE KEEP is that I've not had to make any compromises to make it a mainstream book -- I would have writ-

ten it the same way for a Dell ... paperback original ... except perhaps that I let the sex be slightly more graphic and put a little more emphasis on the love story. But the final product should appeal to the housewife who occasionally reads Stephen King as well as to the hardcore fantasy/horror fan". He also gives credit to his agent Al Zuckerman of Writers' House "for running the show so well".

# A Change of Hobbit, the Los Angeles SF specialty store, is moving to a new location, 1853 Lincoln Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA, 90404, 1 1/2 blocks south of the Santa Monica Freeway on the east side of the street. The new store of 4800 square feet -- almost five times the size of the former location -- resumed business on January 19. The telephone number is (213) GREAT SF.

# THRUST has a new address as of January 1981: 8712 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD, 20760. Due to the move the winter issue will not appear, but the magazine will continue with issue number #17 to be released in April as the Spring 1981 issue.

# By his 65th birthday, November 24, 1981, Forrest J. Ackerman expects to have nine new books bearing his byline in print:

GOSH: WOW! (SENSE OF WONDER)  
SCIENCE FICTION ..... Bantam  
A TREASURE TROVE OF IMAGI-MOVIES ..... Dunning  
LON CHANEY'S "LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT" REVISITED ..... Yoseleff  
(With Philip J. Riley)  
A REFERENCE GUIDE TO AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION FILMS: 1897-1980 (4 volumes, with Albert Strickland; \$120 set, 4000 copies ordered prior to publication)  
ITALIANATHOLOGY ..... (With Luigi Cozzi)



## THE GREAT BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION FILMS ..... T.I.S. Publ.

While Guest of Honor at a ten-day "fantascienza" film festival in Rome, Forry received an Italian "Hugo" -- his third international one. A.E. van Vogt also received an Italian "Hugo".

Forry and Wendyne will be Guests of Honor at the Perry Rhodan May Convention in Amsterdam. Other May events for Forry include shooting a three-day TV show in Zagreb, Yugoslavia; visiting Ljubljana, Brussels, Berlin, the Greek Isles, Athens and Istanbul; and being named an Honorary Doctor at a Florida university.

# THE BOOK OF PREDICTIONS by Irving Wallace, Amy Wallace and David Wallechinsky has a section in it for predictions by science fiction writers. The book which went to press early in 1980, also has a section for "psychic seers", one of whom, Bertie Catching from Texas, predicted that in 1984 Iraq and Iran would go to war.

Arthur C. Clarke and G. Harry Stine were among those interviewed. Both took care to point out that their "predictions" were based on extrapolations from past and present events. Like its predecessors, THE PEOPLE'S ALMANAC and THE BOOK OF LISTS, this book is published by Morrow.

## # MOVIE/TV NEWS:

The October 10, 1980 edition of the WASHINGTON STAR reported that Gene Roddenberry has announced plans are under way to get STAR TREK back to TV. The negotiations with Paramount were caused by the financial success of the movie which spawned interest in doing a TV series. Roddenberry believes the original cast would return, but only if it was a 90-minute or two-hour show.

John Sayles, author of such memorable novels as UNION DUES and PRIDE OF THE BIMBOS (!) and screenplays, PIRANHA and BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS, has completed the script for Steven Spielberg's top-secret flying saucer/extraterrestrial film. Rick Baker will make the aliens. Ron Cobb, art director for CONAN, will direct.

I, ROBOT is set to go at Warner Brothers, directed by Irvin Kershner (director of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK), from a script by Harlan Ellison.

Another Asimov work, "Nightfall", is being developed for the screen by Roger Corman's New World Pictures. The film will be produced by Julie Corman for an estimated \$5-7 million dollars. Ms. Corman described the Asimov story as difficult to screen-adapt, but desires to do the original

work poetic justice. The above info from FUTURE LIFE.

The August 20th NEW YORK DAILY NEWS reports that Columbia Pictures brass are plotting CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FOURTH KIND, wherein "it'll be sexual contact between humans and aliens", reported a Columbia source. You read it here first, folks.

Philip Jose Farmer's novel, THE MAGIC LABYRINTH, spent several weeks on the NEW YORK TIMES' bestseller list. The entire Riverworld tetralogy (TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO, THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT, THE DARK DESIGN and THE MAGIC LABYRINTH) has been optioned by Metromedia Producers Corporation.

Film rights to Philip K. Dick's THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, have been sold to producer Charles Swartz and director Stephanie Rothman, filming to begin this fall.

SEX AND VIOLENCE! Sweden has among the world's most lenient laws regarding sexually-oriented materials; anyone can purchase them and books, magazines, films and erotic implements are readily available. But like all countries Sweden has its own standards of what is obscene, where violence is frowned upon so much that THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK has been banned for children under 15 on the grounds that the film is "too violent and too frightening".

## # AWARDS

### THE BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY AWARDS:

Novel:  
Tanith Lee ..... DEATH'S MASTER  
Short Fiction:  
Fritz Leiber .... "The Button Molder"  
Small Press:  
FANTASY TALES 5 ..... Edited by  
..... Steve Jones & Dave Sutton  
Film:  
ALIEN ...  
Artist:  
Stephen Fabian  
Comic:  
Heavy Metal .... Edited by Ted White  
WORLD FANTASY AWARDS:

Novel:  
Elizabeth A. Lynn ..... WATCHTOWER  
Short Fiction -- Tie:  
Elizabeth A. Lynn ..... "The Woman  
..... Who Loved the Moon"  
Ramsey Campbell .... "MacIntosh Willy"  
Anthology/Collection:  
AMAZONS! ..... Edited by Jessica  
..... Amanda Salmonson

Artist:  
Don Maitz  
Special Award -- Professional:  
Donald Grant (Publisher)  
Special Award -- Non-Professional:  
Paul C. Allen ... FANTASY NEWSLETTER

## # STARLOG/FUTURE LIFE

STARLOG's circulation figures, according to their "Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation", averaged paid newsstand circulation: 113,333, with average mail subscriptions 20,713, for a combined total yearly average paid circulation of 134,046. But their statement in the September, 1980 FOLIO 400, a survey conducted by FOLIO: THE MAGAZINE FOR MAGAZINE MANAGEMENT, is as follows: Average newsstand sales, 330,000 and 27,600 subscriptions for a total estimated circulation of 357,600. Distribution companies use FOLIO for information when they are choosing what magazines to distribute. This info from SF CHRONICLE. The management of FOLIO is looking into the discrepancy.

Helmut Gabriel, editor in charge of PERRY RHODAN MAGAZINE, the largest SF magazine by circulation in Germany, has according to a story in SF CHRONICLE, left the magazine over an alleged bribery attempt; he reportedly agreed to buy a large amount of material from the publishers of STARLOG and FUTURE LIFE on an exclusive basis in return for which Mr. Gabriel would receive a kickback. After Mr. Gabriel's departure, a large quantity of material necessary for production of current and future issues was reported missing.

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# A.E. van Vogt won \$50,000 in an out-of-court settlement with 20th Century Fox for his claims that the movie ALIEN was based on his story, "Discord in Scarlet". The settlement was for "similarities" in storyline. This precedent should make movie studios chary of scripts that are too close to known SF works.

# Kable News is the new distributor of Ace Books. Ace's former distributor, PDC, was purchased by Larry Flynt. FG&F remains with PDC. One of Flynt's associates purportedly beat up a distributor who was late in paying.

# Hank Stine, current Editor of Starblaze Books, has become consulting editor of Belmont/Tower Books.

# The American Book Awards have cancelled the science fiction category because the SF field already has its own awards. What about the Pulitzer?

# Diana King has been named as an editor of THE TWILIGHT ZONE. This info from LOCUS.

# Isaac Asimov appeared on the recent BBC/NOVA special, ALL ABOUT TIME, explaining to actor Dudley Moore several time paradoxes. Asimov, who celebrates his birthday at

the start of the year, turned sixty. Local FM stations in the Portland area reported the fact several times on the first and second of January.

# Jessica Salmonson has sold THE TOMOE GOZEN SAGE to Ace Books.

# Janrae Frank sold a novel to Starblaze, set in the Sharone Amazon Empire.

# Hank Stine and Janrae Frank have married. They first talked together on the telephone after Mr. Stine purchased her novel. Later they became engaged, and the first time they saw each other was on their wedding day. Ms. Frank will serve as the Assistant Editor at Starblaze and Tower.

# Nick Yernakov has sold three books to Berkley, JOURNEY FROM FLESH, AFFAIR OF HONOR and CLIQUE.

# Somtow Sucharitkul has sold a book, THE STARSHIP AND THE HAIKU, to a Japanese publisher.

# Alan Ryan has sold an original anthology to Warner, PERPETUAL LIGHT, a 150,000-word original collection of science fiction dealing with the religious experience. This is an invitation-only anthology. Some of the authors already committed are Brian W. Aldiss, Philip Jose Farmer, Thomas M. Disch, Robert Sheckley and Theodore Sturgeon.

#### # DEATHS:

Kris Neville, 55, died of a heart attack December 23, 1980. His SF short fiction appeared in ANALOG, GALAXY, F&SF and AMAZING. He wrote THE MUTANTS, among other novels, and was currently working on a project involving the early SF magazines.

Sue Petrey, died December 6, 1980. She wrote "Spareen Among the Tartars" for F&SF and recently sold several other stories to Ed Ferman. I saw her at Orycon, where she gave me one of her marvelous backrubs, and heard later that she had gone home feeling rather ill. She will be missed.

Susan Wood, 32, died of undetermined causes on November 12, 1980. She won a Hugo, along with her then husband Mike Glicksorn, in 1973 for their fanzine ENERGIUMEN. She won the Hugo for Best Fan Writer in 1974. At the time of her death she was on a medical leave-of-absence from her English professorship at the University of British Columbia.

# KIRK DIES On page 113 of Vonda McIntyre's latest STAR TREK novel, Capt. Kirk, commander of the USS Enterprise for 15 years ...dies. Dr. McCoy pulls the plug

on Kirk's life-support system.

The new novel won't be released until June.

This info from "Today's People" in the 10/15/80 WASHINGTON POST.

#### # SMALL PRESS:

##### PHANTASIA:

Early 1981: a new science fiction novel by Larry Niven and Steven Barnes, THE DREAM PARK MURDERS. Dustjacket wraparound art by Rowena Morrill.

February: THE GATES OF CREATION by Philip Jose Farmer, the second in the five-book World of Tiers series, with wraparound dustjacket art by George Barr.

##### SABER PRESS:

Its first publication -- seven full-color posters from paintings by three fantasy/SF artists: THE NORTH-ERN GIRL and THE DANCERS OF ARUN by Eric Ladd, who is the artist for Berkley hardcovers; WATER DRAGON by Eric Ladd; STEEL WYOMING and DRAGON SHIP, cover-paintings from F&SF by Barclay Shaw; THE SECRETS OF THE SORCERESS and PEGASUS' DREAM by Tom Kidd.

Several are available in both signed/limited and general editions, while others are sold on a limited edition basis only, ranging in price from \$6 to \$30. For more info write: 104 Charles Street Suite 112 Boston, MA 02114

##### STARMOND:

March 19: THE SCIENCE FICTION REFERENCE BOOK, edited by Marshall Tymn, 460 pages, softcover, \$12.95. Full-color cover and interior illos plus many black-and-white, by Vincent DiFate. The long subtitle, A COMPREHENSIVE HANDBOOK TO LITERATURE, SCHOLARSHIP AND RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FIELDS, is helpful to library buyers, explains STARMOND publisher, Ted E. Dikty. STARMOND address: POB 851, Mercer Island, WA, 98040

#### BOOK NEWS:

##### # BANTAM:

##### February:

Ursula K. LeGuin--THE BEGINNING PLACE  
Philip K. Dick ..... VALIS  
Paul Preuss ..... RE-ENTRY  
Paddy Chayevsky.....ALTERED STATES

#### March:

Harry Harrison ..... WHEELWORLD  
Janet E. Morris ... THE GOLDEN SWORD

#### April:

Walter Tevis ..... MOCKINGBIRD  
Kenneth C. Flint--A STORM UPON ULSTER  
(Fantasy based on Irish legends)  
Janet E. Morris..WIND FROM THE ABYSS

#### # BERKLEY:

John Silbersack, Senior SF Editor, has resigned to pursue a writing career. No replacement will be hired according to Victoria Schochet, SF Editor-in-Chief. Melissa Ann Singer, currently editorial assistant, will become Assistant Editor.

#### # DAW:

In the upcoming year: Three books by C.J. Cherryh and two by Tanith Lee.

#### # DELL:

##### February:

James Prentice (Ed.):  
'Nightflyers'...George R.R. Martin  
'True Names'.....Vernor Vinge  
Michael Moorcock.....COUNT BRASS



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# March:

Mildred Downey Broxton .....TOO LONG  
 ..... A SACRIFICE  
 (Dell's first fantasy special)  
 Michael Moorcock .....THE CHAMPION  
 ..... OF GARATHORM

# April:

Cynthia Felice ..... THE SUNBOUND  
 Michael Moorcock.....THE QUEST  
 .....FOR TANELORN

# # DEL REY:

## January:

Judy-Lynn del Rey (Ed.)...STELLAR #6  
 Piers Anthony .....SPLIT INFINITY  
 L. Neil Smith ..... THE VENUS BELT  
 James White .....STAR SURGEON  
 Hal Clement ..... CLOSE TO CRITICAL  
 L. Frank Baum...THE TIN WOODMAN OF OZ

## February:

Robert L. Forward ..... DRAGON'S EGG  
 Paul O. Williams .....THE BREAKING  
 .....OF NORTHWALL  
 William Tenn...THE SQUARE ROOT OF MAN  
 Jaan Kangilaski ..... HANDS OF GLORY  
 Jaan Kangilaski .....THE SEEKING SWORD  
 L. Frank Baum .....THE MAGIC OF OZ

# March:

Larry Niven .... RINGWORLD ENGINEERS  
 Lee Killough.....DEADLY SILENTS  
 Alexis A. Gilliland...THE REVOLUTION  
 ..... FROM ROSINANTE  
 Larry Niven..... RINGWORLD  
 Larry Niven..... PROTECTOR  
 L. Frank Baum ..... GLINDA OF OZ

# # DOUBLEDAY:

## January:

Walter Tevis ..... FAR FROM HOME  
 (A story collection, half of which  
 appeared in GALAXY, IF and F&SF;  
 the other half is never-before  
 publishers' stories written for  
 this collection.)

# # POCKET:

## February:

Nancy Springer ..... THE SABLE MOON  
 Richard Lupoff (Ed.) ..... WHAT IF?  
 .....VOLUME II  
 David J. Skal .... WHEN WE WERE GOOD  
 Richard Cowper ..... PROPRINDIS  
 Jane Gaskell ..... SOME SUMMER LANDS

# # SIMON & SCHUSTER:

March: All science fiction/fantasy  
 both hardcover and softcover, will be  
 published under the "Timescape Books"  
 imprint.

Gregory Benford .....TIMESCAPE  
 (To be published early 1981 in  
 paperback as a "Timescape Book",  
 may be confusing.)

# # SIGNET:

## February:

Mark J. McGarry ..... THE SUN DOGS

# # WARNER:

Contrary to market reports you may  
 have read elsewhere, Warner is look-  
 ing for three sample chapters and an  
 outline, not complete manuscripts.

# # FINAL WORDS:

Due to the lengthy feature reports,  
 the book news was shortened -- back  
 to normal length next issue. Market  
 reports were also delayed. Next is-  
 sue I'll report on how SF is viewed  
 by a few bookstore proprietors, the  
 results of PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY survey.  
 I've had several requests to include  
 more regular information from foreign  
 markets, particularly Britain. If  
 anybody who lives abroad can help,  
 please write me.

Thanks to all who sent Christmas  
 cards and kind words -- it makes my  
 work worthwhile.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

DUNCTION WOOD  
 THE DEMETER FLOWER  
 WILD SEED  
 KILL THE DEAD  
 THE BUG WARS  
 THE JULES VERNE COMPANION  
 HAN SOLO'S REVENGE  
 DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE  
 ANTIMONY  
 THE HOUSE THAT STOOD STILL  
 THE VISITORS  
 THE HAUNTED MAN  
 SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT: THE UNIVERSE  
 NEXT DOOR  
 THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER  
 STORIES  
 THE CATALYST  
 ENGLAND INVADED  
 BREAKING GLASS (MOVIE)  
 GENESIS REVISITED  
 ALIENS!  
 A TOLKIEN COMPASS  
 WAY STATION  
 ENGINE SUMMER

That's the list as of Jan. 7,  
 but the mail has more....  
 And so goes my travail, the  
 horrendous attempt to keep up with  
 the reviewers and the publishers.  
 But I shall not buckle under the  
 load, nor wobble under the incoming.  
 This is my fight! I'll win, I tell  
 you!

\*Gasp\* \*Groan\* See you next  
 issue.

\*\*\*\*\*



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**THE ALIEN CRITIC #5** Interview  
with Fritz Leiber; "The Literary  
Dreamers" by James Blish; "Irvin  
Binkin Meets H.P. Lovecraft" by  
Jack Chalker.

**THE ALIEN CRITIC #6** Interview  
with R.A. Lafferty; "The Trenchant  
Bludgeon" by Ted White; "Trans-  
lations from the Editorial" by  
Marion Z. Bradley.

**THE ALIEN CRITIC #9** "Reading  
Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei  
and Cory Panshin; "Written to a  
Pulp!" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise  
Level" by John Brunner; "The  
Shaver Papers" by Richard S. Shav-  
er.

**THE ALIEN CRITIC #10** An Inter-  
view with Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest  
of Strange and Wonderful Birds"  
by Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's  
Guest of Honor speech; The Hein-  
lein Reaction.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #14** In-  
terview with Philip Jose Farmer;  
"Thoughts On Logan's Run" by Wil-  
liam F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by  
John Gustafson.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #15** In-  
terview with L. Sprague de Camp;  
"Spec-Fic and the Perry Rhodan  
Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson;  
"Uffish Thots" by Ted White.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16** In-  
terview with Jerry Pournelle; "The  
True and Terrible History of Sci-  
ence Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;  
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;  
"The Literary Masochist" by Rich-  
ard Lupoff.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17** In-  
terview with George R. R. Martin;  
Interview with Robert Anton Wilson;  
"Philip K. Dick: A Parallax View"  
by Terrence M. Green; "Microcos-  
mos" by R. Faraday Nelson.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18** In-  
terview with Lester del Rey; Inter-  
view with Alan Burt Akers; "Noise  
Level" by John Brunner; "A Short  
One for the Boys in the Back Room"  
by Barry Malzberg.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19** In-  
terview with Philip K. Dick; Inter-  
view with Frank Kelly Freas; "The  
Notebooks of Mack Sikes" by Larry  
Niven; "Angel Fear" by Freff; "The  
Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20** In-  
terviews with Theodore Sturgeon  
and Joe Haldeman; "Noise Level" by  
John Brunner; "The Vivisector" by  
Darrell Schweitzer; "The Gimlet  
Eye" by John Gustafson.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #21** In-  
terviews with Leigh Brackett & Ed-  
mond Hamilton, and with Tim Kirk;  
"The Dream Quarter" by Barry Malz-  
berg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #22** In-  
terview with John Varley; "S-F and  
S-E-X" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "After-  
thoughts on Logan's Run" by Wil-  
liam F. Nolan; "An Evolution of Con-  
sciousness" by Marion Zimmer Brad-  
ley.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #23** In-  
terviews with A. E. Van Vogt,  
Jack Vance, and Piers Anthony;  
"The Silverberg That Was" by Rob-  
ert Silverberg.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #24** In-  
terviews with Bob Shaw, David G.  
Hartwell and Algis Budrys; "On Be-  
ing a Bit of a Legend" by Algis  
Budrys.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #25** In-  
terviews with George Scithers,  
Poul Anderson and Ursula K. Le  
Guin; "Flying Saucers and the Sym-  
bolic Factor" by Ray Palmer; ONE  
IMMORTAL MAN--Part One.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #26** In-  
terviews with Gordon R. Dickson  
and Larry Niven; "Noise Level" by  
John Brunner; "Fee-dom Road" by  
Richard Henry Klump; ONE IMMORTAL  
MAN--Part Two.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #27** In-  
terviews with Ben Bova and Stephen  
Fabian; "Should Writers Be Serfs...  
r Slaves?"; SF News; SF film news;  
The Ackerman Interview; ONE IM-  
MORTAL MAN--Part Three.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #28** Inter-  
view with C.J. Cherryh; "Beyond  
Genocide" by Damon Knight; ONE IM-  
MORTAL MAN--Conclusion; SF News;  
SF film news & reviews.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #29** In-  
terviews with John Brunner, Michael  
Moorcock and Hank Stine; "Noise  
Level" by John Brunner; SF News,  
SF film reviews.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #30** In-  
terviews with Joan D. Vinge, Stephen  
R. Donaldson, and Norman Spinrad;  
"The Awards Are Coming!" by Orson  
Scott Card; S-F News; Movie News.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #31** Inter-  
view with Andrew J. Offutt; "Noise  
Level" by John Brunner; "On the Edge  
of Futuria" by Ray Nelson.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #32** Inter-  
view with Andrew J. Offutt, Part 2;  
Interview with Orson Scott Card;  
"You Got No Friends in This World"  
by Orson Scott Card; "The Human  
Hotline" by Elton T. Elliott.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #33** Inter-  
view with Charles Sheffield; "A  
Writer's Natural Enemy--Editors"  
by George R.R. Martin; "Noise  
Level" by John Brunner.

**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #35** Inter-  
views with Fred Saberhagen and Don  
Wollheim; "The Way It Is" by Barry  
Malzberg; "Noise Level" by John  
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