

# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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INTERVIEW ALGIS BUDRYS

AVRAM DAVIDSON GENE DEWEESE ELTON ELLIOTT

BARRY MALZBERG BOB SHAW WILLIAM ROTSLER

RICHARD GEIS  
BRAD FOSTER



ALEXIS GILLILAND  
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# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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BY RICHARD E. GEIS

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RICHARD E. GEIS, THE  
ARCHIVES, THE COLUMNISTS

BUT WHY DOES  
GEIS REALLY  
WANT MY OLD  
ZIP CODE?



UHM... I NEVER SAW AN ELDRICH COWFLOP  
I NEVER HOPE TO SEE ONE... BUT I  
CAN...? A BUT I CAN WHAT?  
TELL YOU ANYHOW?



ELDRICH COWFLOP

# ALIEN THOUGHTS

## RICHARD E. GEIS

### IN THE BEGINNING...

Geis said, "Let there be a diary of sorts." He was out of sorts when he said this. He searched the house, but there wasn't a sort to be found.

Okay, that's got me started.

8-1-84 I don't like the way Kookie is acting and looking...she is losing weight and refusing to eat much of anything. We'll have to take her in and be looked at.

# My bank is ripping me off in the form of check charges, checking acct. charges, etc. These NOW accounts are marvelous: the bank generously pays interest, then stacks the deck so that their "services" cost twice the interest earned; you'd have to keep \$1,000. in the savings account to offset the escalated service charges.

So here's what I want you to do: When you renew your subscription, make the check payable to RICHARD E. GEIS. Not to Science Fiction Review.

That way I can open a personal checking account at the local Benjamin Franklin Savings & Loan Co. (who have free checking with interest if you keep \$300 in the account) and say goodbye to greedy U.S. National Bank of Oregon.

Checks made payable to SFR or REG Publications have to go into a business account, and that's where they get hold of you by the balls. Savings & Loans companies can offer personal checking, but not business checking, by law.

So, once again, PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO RICHARD E. GEIS.

I thank you.

campaign, in order to remove the taint of Carter and Corruption from the democrats. So now Mondale can charge Reagan with having a corrupt White House (Meese) with "clean hands."

Ah, politics. Angry skunks smell better.

# Lately a national religious Decency campaign has resulted in the pressuring of large local food and department store chains to stop selling PENTHOUSE, PLAYBOY and similar "adult" magazines in their stores.

Five of the biggest chains have caved in to the threat of a boycott by religious zealots in and around Portland, and have agreed to stop selling those magazines.

Now the ABC TV channel in Portland has run a "Televote" survey to find out how the citizens feel about this blatantly unconstitutional pressure tactic. They asked people to call a specific telephone number for a "Yes" or "No" vote on this censorship. Over 26,000 votes were made, and 52.3% were in favor of having PENTHOUSE, PLAYBOY, etc. sold in the stores, while 47.7% were in favor of the magazines being not sold in those stores.

I wonder how long it will be before these chains "quietly" put the magazines back in their stores. It costs them a bundle to keep them out.

# Unemployment rose to 7.4% in July (June 18 to July 18 period) from 7.1% in June. Another little indicator that the bloom is off this boom's rose. I'm a bit surprised unemployment is beginning to rise so quickly: it usually lags the early indicators.

But a sign of the times, in Oregon at least: Yard sales, garage sales, estate sales, moving sales, etc. are rampant in Portland. At least in the Northeast areas. The private citizen is in direct competition with major retailers, now.

8-7-84 Kookie has had six "transfusions" of water so far, to help her kidneys and to keep her blood from becoming poisoned by her body's wastes.

All this is very expensive, with blood tests, etc. And I am unable to continue at this rate.

Like society in general concerning Medicare and Medicaid, hard decisions are coming due. \$50-60 dollars a week is beyond my ability to pay after the first week.

I love the little darlin'. But. She's eating better now, however, and scarfs up raw kidneys very well. And cooked chicken (which I smuggled out of King's Table last night, wrapped in a napkin, in my pocket).

But she doesn't seem to drink any water. And that's crucial, or she'll dehydrate, her blood poisons will build up...

Damn!

# The National Federation for Decency has placed protest pickets in front of a 7-Eleven store in Portland, part of a nation-wide campaign to pressure this convenience-store chain into not selling PLAYBOY, PENTHOUSE, etc.

So far, in Portland, Fred Meyers, Albertsons, and Kienows food/dept. store chains have caved in. Safeway never did carry those mags.

But 7-Eleven is not bugging; they believe freedom of choice is the key point of the chain's policy.

The Rev. Donald Widmon of Tupelo, Ms. is director of the National Federation for Decency. Several years ago he urged a boycott of sponsors of certain television shows.

8-14-84 Kookie is drinking water very well now, but I don't think she's eating enough. Even raw liver isn't tempting her. She does like a



few licks of the vitamin paste I give her from the vet (she licks it off my finger). She walks and runs and jumps as well as before, but unless her lack of appetite is the result of the recent heat, I still dread the future.

# Donald M. Miller wrote to tell about his farm/land and survival plan in case of a "blow-up". The most valuable comment for me (and maybe you) concerns woodburning stoves and/or fireplace inserts:

'Get a fireplace with a kit for ducting outside air into the combustion chamber. The kit will pay for itself in the first week in increased efficiency. Do not let anyone tell you "You don't need it". I've had 12 woodburners in six years--- building houses and moving up--- and the only one that was worthwhile had outside air ducts.'

It does make exquisite sense to not suck inside warmed air into the stove or fireplace and send it up the chimney. That is counterproductive.

# 'The House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly recently to reprimand Rep. George Hansen, R-Ida., after his conviction on four felony counts for not reporting some of his wife's income.

'Hansen, with good grounds, said he was not the only one with (this law's) provisions. Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, the Democratic vice presidential candidate, has never reported her husband's income. The law exempts disclosure if the official does not "control or derive any benefit" from the spouse's money.'

---Flora Lewis (syndicated column)

Of course the difference is that Hansen is a very conservative hard-money tax-cutting conservative Republican. And the House is controlled by the Democrats, and Ferraro is a protegee of Speaker Tip O'Neil.

Now Ferraro is refusing to disclose her husband's tax statements (after having promised to do so) because he has refused, and he's a macho Italian man.

So we have a nice juicy scenario to work with in coming weeks. Since Ferraro is an officer in at least one of her husband's real estate corporations, she will have to make some form of detailed disclosure soon. And it may turn out that she and he are millionaires. Tsk. And it may turn out she is in violation of the law.

But don't count on the Demos to reprimand her.

Still, her value to Mondale may be severely diminished, and his ability to make correct choices and decisions may be further questioned.

# The economy: business spending plans have declined. Steel production is falling week by week. Retail sales in June were down almost one percent. Yet consumers went in to debt a tremendous amount---\$9 billion, was it? (Mostly for new cars.) When that is taken away---when the ability to buy a new car is exhausted and new car buyers are scarce, retail sales will plummet and a great shock will ripple through the economy as merchants cut back on accumulating inventory and cancel orders, which will force factories to cut employment.

# With a friend recently, Paulette and I visited a "topless" roadhouse beyond Portland's city limits (in east Multnomah county, beyond 42nd street---very close, actually).

The surprise was that the two dancers were bottomless as well. For discretion purposes only topless is proclaimed on the sign outside.

One dancer was shaved and very professional in working the scattered male audience. She waggled her ass at us (we sat at the stage-side ring of seats and could have reached out to touch her), bent over and peered through her legs at us, displaying her pudenda in lovely, well-lit detail, and was willing to do a little talking over the LOUD music. Nice personality. Good body.

The other girl was a dud, seemingly bored out of her skull and a very limited dancer, as well.

But I was surprised that bottomless was allowed in the county. It seems a well-kept (unpublicized) secret. Without the dancers there wouldn't have been four men in the place. It's a working class place.

Significantly, at a Stuart Anderson Cattle Country restaurant we visited a few days later what turned out to be an overpriced inferior meal with outrageously overpriced drinks (and coffee extra at \$.70 per) the large bar area was packed with young men and women of the yuppie persuasion, a middle class wateringhole which catered to singles. Lots of 20-40 year-old women there sitting together, a lot of young men sniffing around... The olympics were being shown on a 60" screen on the wall. No one was watching.

I couldn't imagine myself going down into that pit and mingling, trying to meet anyone, trying to shout over the chattering roar of that melee, that meat market.

Too old, too introspective, too repelled by that scene, too content with what I've got.

Interesting, too, that even in the topless-bottomless joint, even with that naked pussy gyrating a few feet from my face, and those nice titties bouncing, I didn't have even a slight tingle of sexual arousal.



al. So blasé am I. So sophisticated. I made jokes. I watched silently. I smiled.

After we had watched the girls do their dance sequences twice, we left. Their routines were the same again and again. Same moves, same steps...

The antisex people, those religionists who make a living protesting sexual "exhibitions" and photos and behavior, are more sex obsessed than the customers and habitués of this material.

8-17-84 GENE WOLFE called to my attention a layout goof. Wrote he:

'8-18-84 Dear Dick, Reading Benford with fascination, I got zapped at the top of page 10. And is that last paragraph (of the article) Benford of Gels? You really must stop letting Alter paste up.'

Hurriedly I looked at page 10...and then page 9... Oh, Arrrrrrrrh! Part of a paragraph from the end of page nine had not been carried over to page 10.

The missing part, joined to its opening part of a sentence, from

"In The Wave's Wake" by Gregory Benford, SFR #52, page 9-10, reads as follows:

Ballard preferred to imagine America rather than visit it: facts would get in the way. (Indeed, there is a pervasive inability among Europeans to see American "Optimism" as anything more than a peculiar assertion or defiance, little more than naive bravado, in the face of anxiety.) Moorcock does enormous research for some of his unusual period-piece novels, but none for his sf.

Italics are mine to make the quote distinctive and separate.

Thank you, Gene. Sorry, Greg. Alter Ego wasn't in charge when those pages were pasted up. But it was late, I was sleepy, and that little piece of paper slipped away, perhaps to the floor to hide among the scraps of waste...

# HARLAN ELLISON was the subject of "Talk of the Trade", a column by Leonore Fleischer in the August 10, 1984 issue of PUBLISHERS WEEKLY.

She describes the myriad of re-and new releases coming up in the next 12 months of Harlan's work, and tells of an illness he was (and may still be) suffering from: endogenous depression. Symptoms include physical lassitude (while his mind kept on creating ideas for stories), a series of sudden, overwhelming rages, a loss of sexual interest...

His career suffered, to say the least. This occurred several years ago. He took to the college lecture circuit to keep money coming in. But his writing projects suffered, lapsed... languished....

He spent \$31,000 seeking medical treatment and was finally told his illness was idiopathic----peculiar to Harlan, and incurable. Unless he cured himself.

And that is what Harlan has done. He learned to avoid the storms of rage which afflicted him, to compensate for his fatigue by employing a copy editor and proofreader to live full time in his home.

The result is five books turned in and four contracts outstanding: a mainstream novel, SHIRKES; a surreal fantasy novel, THE PRINCE OF SLEEP; the 750,000, 3-volume anthology THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS (which may now be in the hands of Houghton-Mifflin); a collection of short stories, FROM THE LAND OF FEAR, for Whispers Press.

Depression is perhaps endemic among writers. Anyone of high intelligence (I suspect) has eating away in his mind the disease of Doubt and Rationality.

Animal energy, youthful optimism

and natural emotional resilience can keep the disease at bay for a long time. But sooner or later, I suspect, the questions eat through to the nerves and far back in the mind a dialogue starts in...

"Jesus Christ, man, what are you working so fucking hard for? You've got maybe twenty-thirty years of life left. Why stick to this damn grind?"

"I've got obligations. A family, expenses, duties, responsibilities."

"You've got rocks in your head! You're in this rat race---trapped in this rat race---for ego, for money, for things, for status. It's all phoney, man! It's all hollow. It's all pointless! Why not just stop all this shit and enjoy life? Shrug all these duties and responsibilities off your shoulders and slow down! You're not going to get out of this world alive, you know. You'll be dead meat, a couple people will shed some tears, your precious books and stories will go out of print, and you'll be forgotten. You'll be a lousy entry in books here and there. Big fucking deal."

"But I need a new car. I want new furniture for the livingroom. I have to pay for---"

"Naw, naw. Bullshit. It's ego. You're driven to seek fame and fortune. Be a big man in the literary world. Gotta keep that ol' image sparkling with the glitter of success. But for what? Why? Why bother with all those boring boobs you have to deal with? Why hassle with editors and publishers? Listen, asshole, you don't need ten suits, forty shirts, a dozen pair of shoes, twenty sports coats, fifteen pair of slacks. You don't need a million-dollar house to live in. Bums, hoboes, tramps have more fun than you do. There is no logical, rational reason to work this hard, subject yourself to this kind of pressure and tension, to live well. All you need is a certain small amount of food every day, a room,

a few clothes, a woman to love, a couple friends. The poorest man in America can have those, virtually for free.

"Anything past the minimum, man, is one-upmanship."

"But I love my work! I can't give up writing!"

"If you love it so fucking much, man, why are you so damned tired all the time? Why do you resist doing it? Why would you rather be fishing or riding your bike or meeting new people? Why is it so hard to do what you say you love to do?"

"I do it well! People like to read what I write. I please them. I entertain them."

"Excuses. Face the truth. You are sick of this rut and you're all knotted up with push-pull forces. Face it: it isn't worth it anymore. Face it: life is a fraud; society is a con game. You've been a victim all your life, used by others to create wealth for their use."

"No, no..."

"Yes, yes. But you think you're trapped in this life you lead. You like to be a big frog in this muddy little puddle you've found. But now you're seeing the truth and it's tearing you up inside. What are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know. I don't know!"  
"Shit! Outless. Typical. Ok! Suffer! Be depressed. Get mad, get headaches, get psychogenic diseases. Fight me all you want. The truth can set you free or it can make your life a hell."

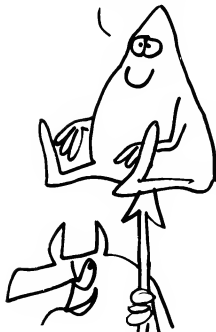
"So I should give up all these things I've worked for?"  
"Things again! I know I'm sounding like a hippie, but out and out slaves live longer and enjoy life more than a writer chained to a desk writing stuff he hates. The bottom line is, schmuck, what's the point in living a lie, doing stuff you hate, dealing with people you despise, if you're going to die anyway? Now, if all this shit could buy you ten or



GODDAMN  
FATE!  
ANYWAY



I LOVE IT, I  
LOVE IT, I  
LOVE IT—



twenty years of extra life, cool!  
But the truth is all this tension and  
pressure and fighting through inner  
resistance only shortens your life.  
You get the short end both ways."

"I can't just stop!"

"Up to you, buddy. We all dig  
our own graves and fill in the date.  
Angst is inevitable if you don't  
listen to yourself."

All this locks into the box known  
as 'the human condition'... We are  
creatures aware of ourselves, aware  
of time, aware of death. We see it  
coming. And we are mostly trapped  
in a matrix of instinct and drives,  
blood chemistry and circumstance,  
environment and heredity. Making  
sense of ourselves and our lives and  
our world is virtually impossible, a  
torment and a fascination, a delight  
and a terror.

The above isn't addressed to  
Harlan. He knows all this better  
than I. Better than most. I'm  
mostly talking to myself.

I'm amazed how quickly I wrote  
the above, and how much fun it was  
to write. Hell, I could fill the  
whole damn magazine with daily in-  
trospective shots. Inspecting one's  
entrails is endlessly attractive.

But how many others want to read  
it? I suspect I'll find out.



8-19-84 It does my heart good  
to see the DEA and the FBI cut off  
at the knees in the De Lorean drug  
trial. How frightful, how sad, how  
delightful!

I've thought for years the Drug  
Enforcement Agency was a mistake,  
and lately as they've gone "head-  
hunting" for Big Names in order to  
get all kinds publicity and to  
justify their existence, it has  
been fine to see them stumble and  
fall into the mud of bad publicity  
and lost cases.

The judge in the De Lorean case,  
and the jury, sent a clear message  
that these set-up entrapments by  
these headline-happy agents and  
agencies has got to stop.

As for De Lorean, of course he  
was technically guilty of conspira-  
cy to do a big cocaine deal, but  
he wouldn't have done it unless the  
government set it up and made it all  
appear guaranteed and safe.

Now the DEA and the FBI stings  
will be increasingly difficult to  
set up and operate as everyone in  
future big-money drug deals will be  
super-cautious and wary, will insist  
on meetings where even the best cam-  
eras cannot work, will wear scram-  
blers to foil recordings... That  
sort of thing.

And anyone with a well-known  
name, any celebrity who is in deep  
debt, will think three times when  
a friend or anyone suggests a drug  
deal to solve financial problems.

I think, too, it's hilarious  
that these former drug dealers em-  
ployed by the DEA and FBI to set up  
these stings always do a number on  
their employers and manage to screw  
up the case by cheating in charac-  
ter and lying as usual.

# Kookie is eating better. Yester-  
day she put away almost a can (small,  
the expensive Salmon Dinner Feast  
kind). I'll try her on her usual  
moist cat food tonight and see if  
her appetite continues, or if she  
has become spoiled rotten. Too, to  
get her to continue eating I have to  
sit next to her on the ground, pet  
her and croon to her... "Nice Kookie.  
Eat a little more, Kookie..."

# I do not usually print press re-  
leases, but in this case I make an  
exception.

'Portland Westercon 37  
(1984 Oregon)  
PO Box 16155  
Portland, OR 97216

'At Westercon 37, Harlan Ellison  
made a moving speech dealing with the  
horrible, vicious things done to  
writers by fans. He took great care  
to point out that these are done by  
only a small percentage of fans, yet  
all must pay for it. At the same

convention, a smoke detector was  
ripped from a hallway and an alarm  
was pulled on another floor. The  
result was the evacuation of hundreds  
of guests from the hotel at 4:15 in  
the morning.

'This unlawful act was done by  
one or two fans or persons masquer-  
ading as fans and we all must pay  
for it. We have already paid by  
standing in the streets in our night  
clothes. We paid by having parties  
closed down for the remainder of the  
con. We will pay in the future as  
it becomes more and more difficult  
to find hotels to host science fic-  
tion conventions.

'This time we are not going to  
turn our heads, tolerate the ill-  
behaved fringe, make excuses for  
them to ourselves and to others. We  
re sick and tired of having our con-  
ventions spoiled by the irresponsible  
behavior of a few. It is for this  
reason the Westercon 37 Committee  
and Oregon Science Fiction Con-  
ventions, Inc. offers the following:

'\$500 REWARD

FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST  
AND CONVICTION OF THE PERSON OR  
PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FALSE  
ALARMS AT THE PORTLAND MARRIOTT HOTEL  
ON THE MORNING OF JULY 2ND, 1984.  
ANYONE WITH INFORMATION SHOULD CON-  
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8-24-84 I get the distinct impres-  
sion that the mighty media are being  
manipulated. I watched a lot of the  
Demo and Repub conventions and was  
struck by the command of TV exhibi-  
ted by the 'behind-the-scenes' men  
who schedule events, provide data,  
etc. at these cons. Especially when  
the nominee for president is known  
in advance. These manipulators then  
must milk every little suspenseful  
event or unsettled question for all  
it's worth. And the networks are  
trapped in these huge, extravagant  
non-events, having committed vast  
sums and manpower to 'covering'  
the con games. Their floor report-  
ers and commentators must themselves  
make news, be provocative, be the  
stars in order to hold the audience  
and provide the ratings to justify  
the prices asked of advertisers.

It's sad and despicable. As an  
observer of the world/national scene  
and commentator on the cultural/  
political scenes, I watch and give  
my opinions. But were I not watch-  
ing to provide grist for my mill, as  
a citizen I'd not watch a second of  
these self-serving, propagandistic  
exhibitions by the national parties  
and by the networks.

Now, if the nets wanted to pro-  
vide some meat and guts to the pub-

lic, they should cover the La Roache (spelling?) candidacy and the Libertarian convention/position.

# Kookie has gotten weaker and weaker. She cannot or will not eat enough to keep from losing weight and strength. She is nothing but fur and bones, now, and getting very weak. I try this cat food, that cat food...raw liver one day, kidneys, raw fish shreds...

She nibbles, licks...walks away.

She drinks enough water for her needs, I guess, but I know she won't last much longer. I pet her and love her up as much as I can, and it tears my heart to see her enjoy it so, and purr... But when she can no longer walk we'll have to take her to the vet for that final shot. **Shit.**

# Steel production down again last week. Commodity prices resuming their downward slide after a brief rally.

Last year the summer doldrums fooled me into thinking the economy was slumping. In the fall the economy surged ahead. That could happen again if the consumers are willing to go even deeper into debt. Car sales are continuing at very high levels. But the trends show a topping out of this boom, and I still think the election will depend on how quickly the coming recession is discovered by the electorate.

The banking system is particularly fragile, with holders of big money (more than \$100,000) deposits unwilling to let them sit in "problem" banks or savings & loan companies. They don't even trust the FDIC in its pledge to guarantee over \$100,000 deposits in large banks, since even in the Continental-Illinois case, the FDIC never has put its pledge in writing to the depositors. And there is nothing so afraid as a million dollars.

The smaller banks and savings and loan companies who do not have that FDIC or SLIDIC pledge to pay all over \$100,000 deposits are suf-

fering a loss of many big deposits as those holders take no chances. Better to hold treasury paper or break the deposits down to the \$100,000 limits and scatter the money around.

Thus the banking system is suffering greatly and becoming ever more vulnerable as hot money becomes ever more jittery and wary. The FDIC's desperate bid to avoid a crisis in the C-I case has made a disaster more likely, later.

It's a familiar attempt to muddle through, to put off the day of reckoning one more month, or year or week...in the hope that something will turn up.

But we live in a hair-trigger financial environment, and the END could come with staggering suddenness.

9-9-84 Kookie is gone. We had to take her to the North Portland Animal Clinic on the 7th, to be 'put to sleep.'

I bawled like a baby after I made the appointment, and couldn't go with Paulette into the--- execution room, later.

Kookie, near the end, was too weak to climb stairs, could only barely walk-- a kind of stagger. She exhibited strange behavior: she refused to enter the house as a rule, and if taken inside, would not settle down, but stand on my lap, impatient to be let out. And sometimes she would come in on her own, mewing for food or something, a brief reversion to her old personality, but once inside would get very nervous and seem to be saying, "What am I doing in here? Let me out! I've got to find a way out!" And she'd run (when she could run) from room to room, seeking an exit.

The last two days she ate virtually nothing. Not even raw liver or raw kidneys, the only things she would eat the last few weeks of her life.

The process of killing a pet is different now, than it used to be. A simple injection of a powerful barbiturate with a poison was used on Chin, my mother's Siamese who had his back or hips broken when a car hit him.

Today they hook up an i.v. and feed an instantaneous-acting drug into the pet's bloodstream.

Paulette told me---I didn't really want to know---that Kookie was very patient when the i.v. was put in and emitted only a small miew when the drug hit. Then she was gone.

**Shit!**

**SHIT!** I'm crying again.

Why is this affecting me like this? Because Kookie was a direct link to my mother, whose cat she was before she died in 1975? Is all this emotion pouring out of me a delayed grieving for my mother? Could be. I don't know.

I do know that when you've lived with someone for 11 years and earned their absolute trust and love, when they are dependent on you for food and shelter and love, and when they give love in return, it hits hard when they get sick and waste away and finally, have to be killed.

Kookie was a person. With a considerable amount of intelligence and knowledge. A cat person.

All right. Let it end. Let it stop. No more about Kookie.

8-29-84 A local weatherman tells of reports of geese flying south already, four weeks ahead of their usual flights.

He didn't say so, but I suspect this may forecast a severe winter, and perhaps an early one.

We'll see.

# Steel production down again last week. Leading Economic Indicators down again, this time .8%.

# I have a friend who believes (for self-serving purposes, say I) in demons. These demons are very specialized, with some entering the mind to whisper, "Go ahead, jump! Commit suicide..." "Blow your brains out!" and others whose duties are to make him forget important dates or appointments. Still others inhabit his enemies and make them do things to make his life a hell...

He's really a nice guy, but he resists responsibility for his life.

But this isn't about his demons, but about mine!

In spite of my sure and certain knowledge that I do love and completely enjoy sitting at this typewriter doing commentary and reviews, an insidious demon sits on my shoulder whispering, "Naw, it's too much





work! Sit here and watch the Financial News Network another few minutes. Ed Hard will have his interest rate commentary at eleven...and then the commodity reports come on again... and the tick is sinking fast, gotta watch that..."

So that's what I fight every day. I put off required columns, I don't read enough, I don't answer mail... Ah, I tell you, the life of one possessed by a demon is hard! Even confessing this is difficult. IT resents my exposure of its activities.

Anyone out there have an exorcism spell? Nothing drastic; my demon isn't all that powerful, else you'd never read these words...

Oh, arrrrghhh! Do you suppose it...it's Alter Ego coming back?

Send that exorcism now!

9-13-84 The Japanese are getting into our space program in a large way. Specifically, over a hundred Japanese corporations, especially the biggies (Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Fuyo) are putting money into American space commercialization companies, with an eye to sharing space and time on the coming American space platform for advanced commercial space manufacturing.

The Japanese are into the leading edge of electronics, and space is the place where that will be researched and tested and manufactured in the future; they are thinking a hundred years ahead.

The American government has mixed emotions about all this.

My own feeling is that the U.S., because of its debt disasters and weird, endless, unmanageable "entitlement" programs will be (is) turned into a kind of Japanese colony: a huge market for their products, a huge workhorse to enable them to stay in the forefront in certain (and maybe all, by then) electronics fields in space, and a free military protector.

Here we are, spending hundreds of billions of dollars every year not to protect ourselves, but to protect Europe, Asia, Africa, Central and South America... We suffer a hundred billion dollar trade deficit every year by buying far more foreign goods than we sell... We are the employer of vast armies of foreign politicians and citizens, the supplier of vast armies...

All to keep Russia at bay?

I smell a con game of staggering proportions going on. We won't be able to afford this empire much longer.



9-15-84 I finally found out the Hugo winners, courtesy DE PROFUNDIS of September.

I knew I hadn't won a Hugo, because nobody called. Ah, the losers languish in stony silence....

So here are the winners. Congratulations all.

Novel: STARTIDE RISING by David Brin  
Novella: CASCADE POINT by Timothy Zahn.

Novellette: "Blood Music" by Greg Bear

Short Story: "Speech Sounds" by Octavia E. Butler.

Nonfiction Book: ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY (III) by Donald Tuck.

Dramatic Presentation: RETURN OF THE JEDI (Lucasfilms, Ltd.)

Professional Editor: Shawna McCarthy (ISAAC ASIMOV'S).

Professional Artist: Michael Whelan.

Semipro Magazine: LOCUS, edited by Charles N. Brown.

Fanzine: FILE 770, edited by Michael Glyer.

Fan Writer: Michael Glyer.

Fan Artist: Alexis Gilliland.

# So in August retail sales declined .8% while car sales increased about .25%. At the same time (same month) consumer debt increased \$7.1 billion.

Figure out what happens when the consumers have reached the bottom of their ability to take on more debt, when they have bought all the new cars they can afford.

The first public awareness that the recovery has peaked and is starting into another recession will be the trigger which pulls the plug on the expansion-of-credit bubble and which plunges retail sales into a 5% drop in one month.

Everyone now thinks Reagan will be re-elected, and that the economy will be good-to-great until after Christmas.

Then all the chickens come home to roost.

We'll see if that scenario will fly all the way.

9-18-84 Here's a very disturbing story from THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. The implications...

'COMPUTERS THAT THINK like people create demand for experts in short supply.

'Interest in "artificial intelligence" systems is booming say employers and recruiters among firms in financial services, computer hardware and software design, defense and communications. The systems principally duplicate the thought processes of experts for trouble-shooting and cash management. Demand for the systems is "explosive" says Halbrecht Associates, Stamford, Conn.

'But Halbrecht recruiter Daryl Furno says "there just aren't enough people to go around" to design the systems. Most prospects have about five job offers when they finish a project.

'DM Data, a Scottsdale, Ariz. consulting firm, estimates that there are nearly 8000 jobs in the industry now, but there will be 50,000 jobs by 1990.'

As production of things is increasingly taken over by computers, computerized machines, computerized factories, computerized transport, the ever-widening, deepening area of employment will have to be services. New entertainment industries, new sports, new ways to fill up time will have to be created and staffed.

Until that adjustment process fills in the social vacuum, however, unemployment will skyrocket in the next decade, primarily because displaced workers will not find jobs and will drag the economy (along

with the debt monster) through a long, severe winter.

The teenagers of today will be moving into the new service industries, including, come to think, the health services complex.

# Here's something to give one pause: TO THE STARS, a Methuselah Press magazine devoted primarily to puffing L.Ron Hubbard's new writing, has changed direction to the extent of hiring Terry Carr as Fiction Editor and scheduling issues which will contain approximately 65,000 words of original science fiction.

Also: William Rotsler is joining the staff as Art Director/Consultant and will work to redesign the magazine.

John and Bjo Trimble, the previous editors, have resigned due to artistic differences.

Address: TO THE STARS  
3963 Wilshire Blvd., #142  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

10-3-84 Been a while since I made an entry...or report...in these Thots.

I've been painting a bit on the garage...keeping the weeds at bay...seeing a host of odd jobs to do...reading for review...doing a partial for a series I hope to sell to a NY publisher...It goes on and on. But let's get to it while the time is here and I'm at the typer.

#### THE RAJNEESHEE RAG

The only comment I have on this comic opera cult with its guru who smiles benignly as he drives one of his fifteen (or more) Rolls Royces past his adoring devotees and followers...is that his personal secretary (and, one assumes from the circumstances, the power-behind-the-throne) has made stupid mistakes and totally misread the people of the surrounding areas in Wasco county.

Well, history: first the corporation which is the secular arm of the guru/cult bought a large ranch near a small town called Antelope. They started to build and create a town of their own and to bring in hundreds of their followers.

Then, perhaps threatened by the state land use board and restrictive county and state laws against unrestricted development of farm/grazing land, the Rajneeshes moved enough of their followers into Antelope, voted their candidates into local office, and took over the town. Antelope is now called Rajneeshpuram. Very few of the town's original residents are left.

The Rajneeshes are now, after more building and development on the

ranch, fighting lawsuits over that development.

And they have recently imported about 3000 homeless people from big cities to the city-commune, ostensibly to help those poor souls, but now, admittedly, to allow them to vote in the November election and perhaps to help "take over" the county government.

All this is causing howls and anguish in Wasco county. The action is causing reaction, of course. The Rajneeshes, feeling threatened, have moved to secure an invulnerable power base--the town and now, presumably, the county govt.

But the imported homeless are not cooperating; they are not taking well to the discipline and hard work required of them, and are homesick for the concrete and steam grates of their big city environments. They are opting to get out of Rajneeshpuram country and are being dumped by the Rajneeshes in nearby towns.

The cost of busing thousands of people to Rajneeshpuram is reportedly well over \$100,000. Initially the imported homeless were promised a return ticket if they chose not to stay. But apparently too many were choosing to leave, and the return tickets were shut off. They are now, it is reported, being bused only to nearby Madras or The Dalles.



There is a lot of suspicion and prejudice against the guru and his organization and followers, especially when his aides and officers lose their cool and start trading insults.

The point of all this is that push is coming to shove, and this on-going controversy will result in some new laws when the legislature meets again concerning voter qualification, residency laws, etc., and likely at attempt to limit the size of the ranch commune and to stop the growth and influence and power of the Rajneeshes.

It'll be a fine show; I'm looking forward to years of entertainment.

10-4-84 On Sept. 23 famous author Doris Lessing said she wrote two novels under a pseudonym 'to dramatize the plight of unknown writers.' The books were rejected by her own publisher, ignored by critics and sold poorly.

She said, "Nothing succeeds like success."

We are supposed to weep and moan for the new writer and smile with cynicism at the proven lack of skill and judgement exhibited by editors, publishers, critics and reviewers who prejudged those two novels Lessing sold to other publishers and which died in England, selling only 1500 copies, and selling only 3000 copies in the USA.

Ah, but her pseudonymous novels did sell and were issued in hardback. And, just maybe they weren't very good novels in the first place. In fact, just maybe Doris Lessing broke into print with a very, very good novel, or early burst of good novels decades ago, and has been running on reputation and inertia ever since, so that in fact her later novels, including her "space fiction" series, the CANOPUS IN ARGOS--ARCHIVES, and her pseudonymous efforts, are the skilled remainders of talent and judged without the aura of success and "name" would be (accurately were) seen as nothing special.

It's a two-way street and a two edged sword. Lessing may have proved editors and critics are frauds...or she may have proved herself a fraud, at age 65, with 25 books to her credit.

Now I see that the pseudonymous novels will be issued in the U.S. this month under the Lessing name as THE DIARIES OF JANE SOMERS, as a Vintage paperback (a division of Random House).

There are break-in opportunities for beginning writers--always have been. How did Lessing get to be a candidate for the Nobel prize?

In this instance we are to believe her "Jane Somers" novels are as good as her early work. Seems unlikely.

# Those of you who have read THE SWORD OF ALLAH may have thought we were exaggerating when we painted FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) in so black a light, by showing the agency as power-hungry and ruthless, trying for its own form of dictatorship.

Yet now---what am I doing using this Prestige Pica ball?

Yet now---[ah, Delegate!!--in Jack Anderson's column of 9-25-84 we see that the agency wants congress to pass special legislation allowing the agency to do the following in a declared emergency:

+ Instant confiscation of real estate or personal property that FEMA decides it needs for national defense. Somebody signs a paper and the armed forces act on it---there goes your house, your computer, your car, truck...whatever you have and they want. No payment, of course.

+ Throw hoarders in jail. If they think you've got too much of anything they can fine you \$10,000 or throw you in jail for a year. Since the jails would be full, that means they'd fine you---take your savings or take your property to sell or use at their price.

+ Nationalize the means of production. FEMA would decide what you would produce if you own a shop or factory. If you demur or refuse or hesitate---they will seize your shop or factory and force the changes they want.

+ Freeze all wages, prices, fees, commissions, rents...and control all consumer credit by presidential decree.

+ Nationalize all jobs. That means slavery: they'd tell you where to work, how to work, when to work. Refusal---jail or a \$10,000 fine.

+ Outlaw strikes. That means the end of effective unions and is another aspect of the slavery envisioned.

Now, it is my understanding that under the Emergency War Powers Act the president can do all of the above already, and delegate all these powers to FEMA.

But this new proposed legislation applies also to non-war emergencies and the definition of a national emergency is not provided---it would be up to the president and his advisors, presumably.

How delightful. How frightful. I'll guess at 1987 when the debt structure has collapsed, when unemployment is at 30%, when all the banks have closed, when rioting is going on in all major cities, when major supply/service systems have broken down---like electricity, food distribution, gasoline distribution...

Jack Anderson notes: "Because FEMA's draft legislation is a stand-by proposal, it will not be offered to Congress ahead of time---when it could be thoroughly debated---but only in the event of a national emergency, when Congress supposedly would be panicked into voting for a dictatorship."

# Paul Doerr, POB 1064, Suisun, CA 94585, has volunteered to run the NFS FISCHER BUREAU. That is, they want to put all the "great old pulp" sf and fantasy mags on microfiche.

[He spells it 'fische', others leave off the 's'. Which is right?]

He needs to borrow complete sets of old mags. He'll pay postage costs. If you're interested or want to help, I want more info, write to him at the above address.

#### MORE THAN YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU-KNOW-WHO

It's Earl Wells' fault. He wrote suggestions for the larger Geis presence in SFR. He wanted to know:

#### 1. WHAT DREW YOU TO SF IN THE FIRST PLACE?

When I was nine or ten years old I found a copy of SUPER SCIENCE STORIES when vacationing at the beach. I consumed it avidly; my naturally keen intelligence was drawn to sf, and, once bitten with the wonders of space-time, I was never the same.

#### 2. WHAT STORIES DO YOU REMEMBER MOST VIVIDLY FROM YOUR EARLY READING?

A.E. van Vogt blew my mind regularly, especially THE WORLD OF A... or is it A? NULL A, anyway. And the classic NIGHTFALL by Asimov. FINAL BLACKOUT by Hubbard... The Lewis Padgett stories and novels... THE SHIP OF ISHSTAR... Almost every story in UNKNOWN.

I was not impressed with SLAN, curiously enough, nor with Heinlein's sf juveniles.



#### 3. HOW DO YOU READ ANYTHING LATELY THAT GIVES YOU THE SAME KICK?

No, alas. Too many stories and novels have passed my eyes...and through my fingers. That first thrilling era of discovery cannot be re-experienced. Everything was new. Now almost everything is old. I can appreciate fine writing, an original idea, a new twist, of course, but it's not the same. You're only a virgin once.

Ah...let me amend: Phil Dick's novels often blew me away, especially UBIK.

#### 4. HOW DID YOU START WRITING? WHAT HAVE YOU WRITTEN?

I started writing letters of comment to Sam Merwin when he was editing STARTLING STORIES, as I recall, and I wrote a column for THE TECH PEP, Benson Polytechnic's school paper: "The Professor of Screwlooseology" was the column's title. I also wrote straight, right-thinking editorials.

In 1951 or so I wrote two stories and sent them to TWS and SS. Awful! They came back.

In 1958, when I moved to Venice, California, I wrote a short story and sold it, right off, to ADAM magazine. I spent a year selling a hundred short stories to ADAM, SIR NIGHT and other L.A.-based men's magazines.

In 1960 I wrote a novel, LIKE CRAZY, MAN! and sold it to a Chicago publisher...and sold about a 100 novels to sex publishers in the next 23 years. I still write an occasional porno novel.

And I published my fanzine, PSYCHOTIC in the mid-fifties...was a member of The Cult for a few years. I think in 1967 I revived PSYCHOTIC, then eventually changed its name to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW...killed SFR in 1972...published an intensely personalzine called RICHARD E. GEIS in 1972...returned to Portland and revived SFR...and have been publishing it regularly since.

Collaborated with Elton Elliott on THE SWORD OF ALLAH in 1982, and on THE BURNT LANDS in 1983-4.

I have partials out to the publishers in NY now, and hope for the best.

I'm remembering more and more... The self-published 500-copy editions of STAR WHORES and THE CORPORATION STRIKES BACK (sf sex novels), and the short-lived, less personal RICHARD E. GEIS, and the shorter-lived THE CONSPIRACY NEWSLETTER of a few years ago.

This sketch of my writing career and hobby is riddled with bad memory for dates, but it's fairly accurate.

Your suggestion that I reprint some fan and pro stuff I've done is met with inertia and ugh. Nope.

#### 5. HOW DID YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY REACT?

I'm not sure about my family. One friend has always been impressed with my stuff. I think my dad was tolerant and perhaps a mite proud; he'd wanted to be a writer, briefly, in his 30's. My mother never said; I think she lied about me to most of her friends; she couldn't show a copy of ORAL DAUGHTER and be proud.

She wanted me to be a respectable man...a baker like my uncle, or an accountant. But she was tolerant and supportive. But I never really knew her or my dad. Their real feelings were hidden; we never let each other behind the masks.

#### 6. WHAT WERE YOUR EDITORS AND COLLEAGUES LIKE?---WHAT WERE THEIR OFFICES LIKE? WHAT DID THEY WEAR?

They were just people. The editors I met were people who could give you money or withhold it. Brian Kirby was marvelous--very smart, ahead of his time, a collector. I liked Sam Merwin, but I was put off by his smoking. I regret I didn't get to know him a lot better. (He was the editor of Brandon House, a sex house, for a few years...) Editors changed often. Everyone dressed casually. Editorial offices, including this one, are always strewn with books and mss.

I met a few people in California...Harlan, Hank Stine, Charles Platt, Fritz Leibler, Poul Anderson, Phil Farmer...But mostly I know people by mail, and phone.

#### 7. WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS ON THE CRAFT OF WRITING?

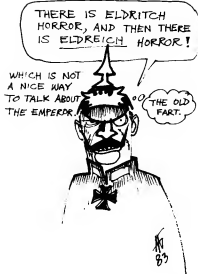
I think craft is important, but talent more important. I think most professional fiction writers don't have much talent. I think most professional fiction writers are boring, in print; their fiction is too slow and dull.

#### 8. IF YOU COULD WRITE ANY BOOK YOU LIKE, AND HAVE IT PUBLISHED, WHAT WOULD IT BE ABOUT?

It would be my diary for a year, written with total honesty and freedom. But in the real world such a published diary is virtually impossible. I'd be considered a psychotic, a male chauvinist, a fascist, a heretic, a monster, a racist, an idealist, a cynic, a marvel, a great writer, a coward, a fool, a libertine, a genius, the bravest man in the world, and the most tolerant man in the world. And I'd have several dozen lawsuits on my hands for libel and slander.

And no publisher in the world would touch it. But you asked.

#### 9. IN THE SWORD OF ALLAH DID YOU USE THE SHORT-CHAPTER, MULTIPLE-VIEWPOINT TECHNIQUE BECAUSE YOU FIGURED YOUR AUDIENCE HAS A SHORT, TV-INFLUENCED ATTENTION SPAN? OR DO YOU JUST LIKE IT BETTER?



There was some calculation in our planning; the structure was used for commercial reasons and it fit the material. Originally, we had planned longer chapters and more of them, but our agent knew a 175,000 word novel, from us, unknowns, was not going to be accepted.

The short chapters are a result of my writing style and philosophy; I hate the idea of boring a reader, and my talent has been honed to write scenes with conflict and tension. [Curiously, and depressingly, the latest poop on porno novels is that the readership doesn't want anything that distracts from the sex action, and the characters have to be all willing and eager. This leaves me without much to do except detail a great deal of intense, orgasmic sex activity. That can get very repetitive...and challenging, in a way. Variety and characterwise.

Okay, that's the end of your questions, and the end of my energy; gotta go up and make a deluxe Geis salad--lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, cheese, sausage, hard boiled eggs... oil and vinegar and seasonings. And watch a few hours of TV before bed.

10-10-84 SQUEEZE...CUT...SWEAR... This is the crucial period when I have just counted the layout pages and found I have 65.

Since this is a 64 page zine, a hard choice or two is due, especially since I haven't pasted up the Archives yet. And Darrell Schweitzer's column hasn't arrived.

The Editor puts on his hat. The Editor rubs his stubbly jaw. A steely glint comes into his brown eyes... (Don't ask about brown steeli) and he makes his decisions!

The Schweitzer will be put off till next issue.

The Archives will be put off (and necessarily longer) next issue.

The article/memorial about Stanton A. Coblentz by Dr. Jeffrey M. Elliot will be put off till next issue.

This leaves me with 63 pages, and an extra page of book reviews will be slipped in to make the total right and proper.

Deadline time is the 12th--two days--and a lot of work remains to be done.

ONWARD!

# Yes, as a matter of fact, I did see the debate (confrontation?) between Mondale and Reagan.

Watching Reagan fumble and stumble as he tried to think on his feet without a teleprompter or 3x5 cards or a whisper in his ear was painful. I cringed as I watched.

Normally I can forgive his hesitations and gropings for words, but this time, in contrast with Mondale's swift, sharp, alert speaking style and eager attack, Ronny seemed dead in the water, bogged down with difficulty to remember statistics, and tired...so tired...and old. Those lines seemed deeper. He is getting grey now, isn't he?

Is he deteriorating? Is 73 too old?

I thought: my god, this man is a parrot; without something to read he's reduced to grooved cliches and a vague conservative philosophy he cannot intellectually articulate. He has no guts and no brains.

So if I vote for him in November, I'll be voting for his advisors and aides, his staff. For Nancy. Ron Reagan is a hollow shell, and one that's cracking and crumbling before our very eyes.

As for Mondale---he's a clever, sincere, dedicated Liberal in hock to his eyeballs to everyone in sight. He's a demagogue, a deliberate liar, a man who is one of the career politicians I have grown to hate.

He will not be able or be willing to address the monumental problems this country faces. Maybe more so, now, than Reagan, because as a bleeding heart Liberal, Mondale will be able to make cuts and reductions in the budget that Reagan could not and cannot make.

But both these men are playing lying games about Social Security; in a few years the program will be cut back in various ways in spite of all this swearing up and down it'll never be cut.

And Mondale and the Democrats will cut back the military budget drastically. They'll have to become

# *An essay, ostensibly on the fantasy cinema, with at least one word misspelled the title, and much of the rest having no*



*real relevance to the subject, you see*

My grandfather's first sight of the silver screen made local history. Having heard some laughably erroneous talk about a large-scale magic lantern show being conducted in the empty store in the next block, the next time one of the kids asked, "Papa, can I have an ice-cream horn?" he said, "Let's go see this, ho, ho, Movie, in-stead."

He very soon realized that this was no ordinary magic lantern show. Some law enforcement agency, the name of which he could not make out, had planted cameras unobserved by a gang of dirty rotten train robbers; sure enough, these pictures moved! What next? A flying machine on Main Street, maybe. The locomotive engine moved, it moved pretty quick, you bet, all of a sudden it was moving towards my grandfather, who began to advise the locomotive engineer to steer it somewhere else. You bet, when, with an enormous lunge and surge it seemed to leap through and out of the screen -- with an immense shout of: "DUCK!" my grandfather dived out of his chair and became flat with the floor.

This was pretty painful. What was worse was that some people there laughed at him. They laughed! As he picked himself up and brushed his clothes and looked around and asked, "Where did it go? Hey?" why some people (well, to be truthful, a lot of people) laughed. A fine way to behave towards an American citizen, the father of a family, a man who owned his own business! For years thereafter when one of the kids would ask, "Pappa, can I go to the movies?" Pappa would growl, fumble in his pocket, pull out a penny or maybe a two-cent piece of maybe even a three-cent piece, and say, "Go buy an ice-cream horn." It was years before he ever entered a moving picture theater again. After that he went all the time.

The first time I recall going to the movies, myself, was in 1927. The film was all in blue. Obviously THE BLUE ANGEL, eh, with Mariene Dietrich? Obviously. Some slight

difficulty there, though: THE BLUE ANGEL, which was all in blue, came out in 1930. Elements of the Fantastick right there, eh? What did I see, then, in 1927? I don't know. What, you think I'm some sort of WhizQuizKid? One of those know-it-alls? As far as I am concerned I am right there with those language in which the word for film is the same as the word for strip: the movie film and the mobius strip are one and the same. To me.

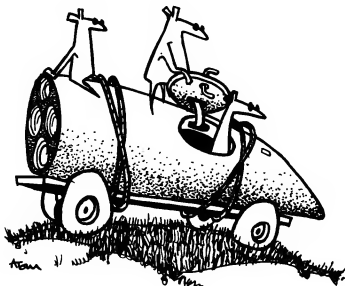
Damon Knight and I are having a discussion. Damon Knight's beard, however, has not been invited to the discussion, and is in a different isotherm if that is the word ... though of course still attached to Damon Knight. The subject is the Stfnal Film. Or Film. Or, in Spanish, Flan. "... and then I remember Richard Dix," say I. "You remember Richard Dix? In TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL?"

"I remember Richard Dix. I re-

*by Avram Davidson*

member no such film as TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL. Refresh my memory." Says "Damon Knight."

The conversation takes place in Milford, Pennsylvania. We are drinking mint juleps, how's that for Fantastick. Apple blossoms are darn sure falling off the trees. There is a scent of scrappell in the air. Pennsylvania is a very fantastick State. It has official things with names like The Prothnatory, The Court of Quarter Sessions and Jail Delivery, the President Judge, and the Chief Burgess. The President Judge, in Milford, also ran the shoe store and the movie house. The Chief Burgess was also the Chief Bagger at the Grand Union. And the Prothnatory prothnated, "Now Harold," he'd say, "says right here that the milch cow of a widow woman is like that of a femme couvert cum vir viv, and cannot be seized for her husband's debts; see? Says right here." Whereupon Harold would look and



say, "Oh, why so it does. Says so. Right there. Say. You got nee jugs fr my hard cider?"

I sip the coldth of my milch julep. "There's this great scene. Underneath the ocean there's this immense gate, see? And the Tunnel springs a leek (Leak? you got com-plaints, go see my lawyer) and so the gate's got to be closed. It slides closed very-ry slowly, and the people scurry to get to the other side, and when it's closed the ones caught sort of beat at and stroke on it. Hey, what a great scene!"

"No," says Damon. "No, no, no."

"What 'no'?"

D. Knight gathers in a sort of a league or two of his beard and thrusts his nose into his julep cup. "Oh no," he says.

"Well, then, use a different kind of whiskey. I never liked Dover."

Mr. Knight explains. "The scene you describe is from the science fictional or fantastical film or flic of the 20s called METROPOLIS. I recall that scene with the flooded gate quite clearly. For some reason your subconscious mind has constructed a film called TRANS-ATLANTIC TUNNEL and imagined the METROPOLIS scene into it."

I denied this. Very carefully I explain that my only info on METROPOLIS was contained in a few stills in the same issue of SCIENCE AND INVENTIONS magazine which had a chapter from a novel titled TARANNO (TYRANNO? Why are you asking me? Why do I have a lawyer for?) THE CONQUEROR. Author? Who knows. Ray Cummings, maybe. The artist was indubitably the great Frank R. Paul. The magazine's publisher was Hugo Gernsback. "I recollect no submerged gate scene," say I.

"METROPOLIS," says Mr. Knight.

#####

Years pass. Lustra. Decades. I am in a State to the south of Pennsylvania, where at the College of William and Mary, Their Majesties Royal Colledge in Ye Kingdom of Virginney, I hold an office of some sort. Chief Bagger? Dean of Grouse? Writer in Residence? Something like that. And one day, perceiving that a showing of the classical mid-20s film, or flim, METROPOLIS is to be shown, so I go to see it. The first scene shows a fountain. Nextly, in darts a woman person almost entirely garbed in a close-fitting silvery something-or-other, with the exception of her

armpits, which she shows us quite a lot of; each, as Michael Arlen says in THE GREEN HAT, a novel almost contemporary with the flic, each "as smooth as an ivory cup." Fine. Then we meet The Mad Scientist, by name Rotwang, you got that? No name more felicitously suited to a Mad Scientist than Rotwang has ever appeared. Since, of course, Frankenstein. --What? "But Frankenstein wasn't mad?" Believe that, you'll believe anything; mad, I tell you, mad!

They say I am mad, but I am not mad. Had I but known the horror which awaited me in the strange high house in the mist that night in

Jesus Christ, who writes those lines?

Metropolis itself was a great city in the future, characterized by skyscrapers connected with each other, a half-mile up, by bridges. Why has this decorative and indeed convenient feature never come to pass? The sky was also filled with aeroplanes, if that word is not spelled exACTLY, heads will fall, and every now and then an aeroplane would make an abrupt right angle and fly away on it. There were toiling masses in the depths of this submerged bauhaus city, and -- I forget -- just how -- the waters of the deep were broken up, the masses fled or tried to: Suddenly someone was trying to hold the fort, actually a gate -- as METROPOLIS was a good decade before TRANS-ATLANTIC TUNNEL, very clearly the makers of IT had cribbed the gate-against-the-waters scene from M. Ripped it off. And did it much better too. Much, do you hear?

I pass this info on to Damon Knight. He replies, "Your comments puzzle me. I never saw METROPOLIS, having walked out on the first scene. I never saw TRANS-ATLANTIC TUNNEL. True, I did see Richard Dix, but in CIMARRON, a Western by Edna Ferber, the famous westerner. What are you doing in Virgin-ia?" Presently Damon Knight returns to Oregon, his natal state, slowly followed by a long crepuscular note, declared by the Bureau of Standards to be his beard. Many however, believe it to be the 40th parallel. Or the 49th.

#####

Damon Knight, it is averred, was among the authors of CAPTAIN VIDEO, a sort of Hopalong Cassidy of the space waves in the early days of television ... "video" in those days merely meant "television," instead of what it means to-

day ... whatever it means today. But why is D. Knight hogging up so much of the space in his act, after all, supposed to be my my idiosyncratic essay on the Fantasy Flit -- say: anybody read my short snort, FAED-OUT, which appeared in F&SF? It is about the essential flit fantastique, with elements of them same on the late night telly-o. Read it at once, do you hear? "Captain Video, a sort of Hopalong Cassidy ... in the early days of television ..." yes, and so was Hopalong Cassidy. Who was he? A rather ordinary movie cowboy, played in many films, or flims, by William Boyd. Nobody in Hollywood thought much of him until, by and by, they began to think of him as just a bit, well, kooky. Why? Well, different actors held out for different things, contract-wise: it was William Boyd's thing that, during the 30s and 40s, he had held out for television rights to his own films, that is, the Hopalong Cassidy movies in which he had acted: sort of like holding out for Martian rights today. The movie moguls said, S-u-r-e, Bill ... signed on the line, went away to snicker and guffaw. WHO cleaned up the money during the early years when it was chaos and confusion as to who owned what rights for TV? William (Hopalong Cassidy) Boyd. Is who. As for the rest, well, there were, for funnywise things, UNCLE MILTY. And, as a friend wrote to me in 1949, I being out of the country, "It's great sitting in your own living room watching these lovely movie stars, and, say, that Theda Barra is some babe." And if you wanted a line of Westerns, others, horse-oprey, in which the action did not hop around the flickering frames, who, who else? Hopalong Cassidy. Who.

Even to those who remember the name "William Boyd" it may come as a surprise that in the 1930s there were two actors of that name. True, they were both on the screen, but one had once been on the stage. Neither wished to give up the name. The matter was settled by giving us two, neatly denominated as Bill (Stage) Boyd and Bill (Screen) Boyd. I rather think that Hop-o-My-Thumb was Screen. Not sure. And I rather think that it was Stage who acted in the only Sfnal Serial I remember. This would be in the middle 30s. The Serial, you know? We rotten kids called it, Thuh Chapter. This one's name? No idea. It was about a Secret City, located -- naturally -- in a Jung-le. Where else would you put it? At one time, say, in The Arabian Nights, a Secret, or, Lost, City, could have been stuck in a

desert. But by the 30s, what with aeroplanes, only a jungle could hide them. The gross national (municipal?) (city-state: okay?) product of this Lost/Secret City was based on the Zomby trade. About the only other stfial thing I still recall was the tele-phones. A neat gimmick. You spoke full-face into the tele-phone screen at your end -- and you appeared in profile at the tele-phone screen at the other. But ... Zombies? ...

There must have been, I think, White Zombies in this William (?Stage?) Boyd film, as well as Black. Somehow, if so, nevertheless I just remember the Black ones. A Black man went into the Zomby Chamber, about twice the size of a phone booth, and -- Zapp! Bolts of lightning, dry-ice-type bubbly smoke, and the sort of general effects which General Electric showed at fairs. As a result of all this, the individual grew about two feet taller and an appreciable space broader, his eyes turned zomboid, and his hair -- his hair, let me tell you, turned straight -- straight-up. And remained that way.

That sort of thing in today's movies, and I rather think there would be Disturbing Incidents in the Sweet Wine of Choice neighborhoods of our large cities. Don't think there were any then. There weren't, as many openings in films for members of the Mighty Race (as Field Marshal Marcus Garvey used to call them, whilst sticking his very large hands into their pockets and removing the contents) then. Oscar Michaux didn't make spooky-films, it is true, but Mr. Michaux (pron. Mee-shaw) didn't pay very large sums. He didn't have them to pay and likely wouldn't have paid them if he had. But the story of the dark David Mark Griffiths should be told by someone who knows it.

Remember THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME (H.G. Wells)? Remember THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES (H.G. Wells)? Remember the huge gong-beater whose Olympics-like slow beat told us that this was a J. Arthur Rank film? Remember the White Rajahs of Sarawak? What's the connection? Well, the third and last WR, to wit Charles Vyner Rajah Brooke, had no sons to succeed him, perhaps why he sold his rajahdom to the British Colonial office for 7 million something-or-others--pounds? Dollars? Who knows. The king didn't talk to me and I didn't talk to the king, an agreement we had. Nod while passing, though. Well, the last White Rajah had had three daughters, though, and whilst I don't know

that I recall their names, they seem to have been conventional British names: say, Margaret, Pamela, and Jane. The natives of Sarawak, however, called them Princess Gold, Princess Silver, and Princess Pearl. I understand that the Rank gong-beater was no mere unknown, but a professional wrestler of some note, named Bob something. "S your uncle!" Go-away!! And he was the husband of no less than Princess ... well, maybe it was Princess Silver. The marriage, however, did not last. And neither did the White Rajahate. Maybe they should have kept the Rajah in London and sent the big wrestler to Sarawak. And just let him beat a gong at each stop.

Well, I am sure that you all know quite enough about the special effects of those flicks, so I shan't say one word about that. I for my part, marvel at certain very mundane things in those films. For instance, and in connection with the MAN WHO, which I've seen most recently, for instance: that most of the people who worked for British shops in the mid-30s were obliged to sleep in a dormitory and eat at a common table and were not masters or mistresses of their own time even when off duty; that the high assistant (played by Roland Young) who was allowed to "sleep out" slept in a room lit by candle light (in the mid-30s) and the pub where he had his nightcap was (in the mid-30s) lit by oil lamp; to me these things, taken for granted at the exact time I entered my teens, are fully as fantastic as null-gravity and all the rest.

MAD LOVE.

#####

No doubt it has and has had another title, titles, but it played as MAD LOVE when I saw it in the late-ish 30s and it is as MAD LOVE that I think of it. 'Twas in this vehicle I first saw Peter Lorre and I think in it that I first observed the ripple-effects, the crazy musics, the cookoo inner voices, all intended to indicate gathering insanity ... You recall? A concert pianist loses his precious hands in an accident; immediately a stranger is guillotined. The stranger's hands are grafted onto the pianist's arms. Guess what.

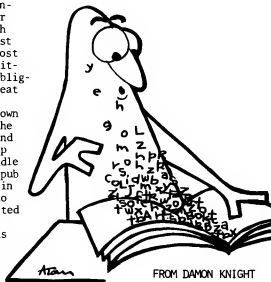
Right.

Much later, there was BITTER RICE ... but BITTER RICE, you say, is not fantastic? Ja Ja! Vd dice -- I first saw it in France and without subtitles: A French soundtrack had been dubbed in. I did not find academic French tres utile in un-

derstanding the film. And I subsequently saw it in, please believe me, in Bulgarian -- er, not exactly: the sound track was still in Italian. The subtitles were in Bulgarian. If all this is not fantastic, que es? Ja! To this day I have no idea what it was all about. Women. Rice. Lots of water.

Well, lights, action, camera -- interlock and roll! This has been quite a tour we have taken! Damon Knight says that the film which scared my Grandpa's pants off was THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY -- but the only time I've seen it, and there, several times, was at Disneyland. And in their version the famous scene did not appear. Was it indeed ever in that picture? If not, why not? So few questions, so fewer answers. Well --

Any time you're ready, C.B.!



FROM DAMON KNIGHT  
December 30, 1983

'This is a champion article, chiefly because it mentions my name a lot. In fact, I do remember the famous flooding scene in METROPOLIS, so I must have seen it; on the other hand, I also remember walking out after the first episode, in which Rotwang and his father confront each other with extravagant gestures, and I don't remember the famous lady robot, whom, if I had seen her, I certainly would have remembered, so all I can say is, trust me, kid.\* Wish I had seen Richard Dix in TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL. Too late now. I missed Charles Laughton in ISLAND OF THE DAMNED, or whatever they called the film version of THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, and then like thirty years later, on television, I did see it, and it was awful.'

\*Who you gunna bleeve, him or me?  
--A. Davidson.

# ONCE OVER LIGHTLY

## BOOK REVIEWS BY GENE DEWEESE

**JOB: A COMEDY OF JUSTICE**  
By Robert A. Heinlein  
Ballantine/Del Rey, \$16.95

Alex Hergensheimer is ostensibly a top-level blue nose and religious fund raiser on an alternate Earth where someone like Jerry Falwell would be considered a flaming liberal. It's the late twentieth century, but people are put on public display in the stocks for even minor infractions of that world's super-puritanical moral code.

Hergensheimer is not in that world for long, however. From the first chapter on, some mysterious power--God or Loki or some other supernatural mischief maker--shuttles him from one wildly different world to another, often depositing him in a new world not only broke but naked. The only thing common to all the worlds in that the Millennium is due any minute. Earth is about to be destroyed and the faithful swept up to Heaven, and after a dozen or so extremely discomfiting world shifts, that is exactly what happens.

For the rest of the book, Hergensheimer, now a Saint, complete with a halo, finds himself fighting the rigid Heavenly bureaucracy and finally searching through Hell itself (a pleasant, rather anarcho-istic place, run on the free enterprise system) for Margrethe, his non-Christian lover, who has been caught up in the world shifts along with him.

The story's basic ideas and viewpoints are fascinating, but they're far from new. In fact, JOB is often reminiscent of the excellent HEAVENLY DISCOURSE, written by Charles Erskine Scott well over fifty years ago. Particularly similar are the many dialogues and situations emphasizing the absurdities you run into if you take the Bible and its rules literally. Heinlein does, however, go a bit further than Wood, though no further than many sf writers have gone in the past. His altogether believable explanation for God's peculiar behavior, for instance, may jar some readers but will be ap-

preciated by many more, particularly fans of Lester del Rey's fifties novella, "For I Am a Jealous People."

But there is one major problem with JOB, and that is the narrator himself, Alex Hergensheimer. He is supposed to be the ultimate puritan, but only occasionally will he say or do something that is really "in character." He worries endlessly about the fact that his lover has not "accepted Christ," for instance, and he often berates her for wearing shorts in public. And whenever the story requires it, he vigorously but superficially defends all the Biblical dogma he has supposedly been weight-dogged down with.

His actions and his flip and funny narration, however, seem to come from a totally different character. In those, he is very much the typical Heinlein hero or heroine, competently surviving one disaster after another and relating his adventures with easy-going (though often "old-fashioned" and occasionally sexist-sounding) wit.

As a result, JOB seems to have a split personality. The story and the ideas are gripping enough, and Heinlein's writing is, as always, smooth and funny and entertaining, but the gap between what the narrator is and what he says he is is often distracting and occasionally even irritating. It could have been a lot more effective (though probably a lot less amusing) without that gap. Still, if that sort of inconsistency doesn't bother you--or even if it does--JOB is certainly worth reading, particularly if you haven't run into these ideas very often before.

**THE LAST DAY OF CREATION**  
By Wolfgang Jeschke  
Translated by Gertrud Mander  
St. Martin's, \$12.95

Spurred on by the finding of present-day artifacts buried in million-year-old soil, the Navy de-



velops a time machine capable of sending men and supplies millions of years into the past, where they plan to lay a hidden pipeline from the Arab oil fields to the North Sea, where the oil can be pumped into our present-day world through time machines disguised as oil rigs. Others from other countries and other futures have similar notions, however, and things go wrong from the start. Eventually, the travelers realize that the time machines work only in one direction, into the past, and that they will never get back to the present, if that present even exists anymore.

The segments dealing with the discovery of the artifacts are almost Victorian in their style and detail, and even the adventures in the past have an odd, KING SOLOMON'S MINES feel to them, particularly in the scenes involving the time traveler's savage but often likable pre-human allies, dubbed "the Chaps." As a whole, the book is a bit episodic, but that doesn't keep it from being downright fascinating, particularly to time travel and alternate reality fans like myself.

PUBLICITY DIRECTORS, EDITORS,  
PUBLISHERS, AUTHORS...ARE  
URGED TO SEND BOOKS FOR REVIEW  
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He reviews sf and fantasy for  
THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL as well  
as SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and  
other magazines.



## VOYAGE TO THE CITY OF THE DEAD

By Alan Dean Foster  
Ballantine/Del Rey, \$2.95

The latest in Foster's "Common-wealth" series, this is basically a lost world adventure, only instead of Professor Challenger or Allen Quartermain, the adventurers are a pair of human scientists, Lyra and Etienne Redowl, and the lost world they are exploring is the impossibly massive Barshajagad Canyon on the planet Tslamina. Home to three totally different intelligent races, the canyon and the river that runs through it take the explorers from the hypertropical shores of the planet's central ocean to the northern ice cap, where they find something far more interesting and mystifying than anything Challenger or Quartermain ever found, something that harks back to the first novel in the series, *THE TAR-ALYM KRANG*.

With its well-developed alien cultures, believable characters, and new wonders and surprises every few pages, *VOYAGE TO THE CITY OF THE DEAD* is at least as good as anything else in the series and provides more good "sense of wonder" adventure than you're likely to find anywhere outside the latest *DUNE* epic.



## SKYWALKING

By Dale Pollock  
Ballantine, \$3.50

For anyone interested in how George Lucas has managed to turn out one blockbuster after another, this biography provides engrossing answers. Starting with his student films and taking him through to *RETURN OF THE JEDI*, it's filled with fascinating details and sidelights on virtually every phase of his work, from conception and writing through to filming and beyond.

For instance, did you know that an early draft of *STAR WARS* had Obi-Wan Kenobi and his arch enemy Darth Vader combined into a single character? And Alec Guinness, when he didn't care for one of his speeches in *EMPIRE*, sometimes would give it to Yoda with the comment, "Why doesn't the little green thing do this one?"

In short, *SKYWALKING* is an often amusing, always interesting account of the real inner workings and problems of moviemaking without, thankfully, any of the scandals and so-called confessions that have been so popular lately.

## THE DUNE ENCYCLOPEDIA

Compiled by Dr. Willis E. McNelly  
Berkley, \$9.95

This could be subtitled, "Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Dune But Were Too Confused To Ask." In these five hundred pages, you will find a complete 30,000-year chronology of the Empire, a chemical diagram of melange, histories of all the Duncan Idaho gholas, diagrams and lengthy explanations of the inner workings of the sandworms, a complete list of the 374 Emperors of the Known Universe up to Leto II, the accepted methods of contraption, examples of Gurney Halleck's songs, and--- Well, you get the idea. It's -he sort of thing you can browse through at your leisure, but once you pick it up and start looking, you'll probably be hooked for at least an hour or two. And for anyone thinking of reading any of the *DUNE* series for the first (or second or third) time, it would be invaluable.

## MAGICATS!

Edited by Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois.  
Ace, \$2.95

For most cat freaks like myself, a collection of sf and fantasy about cats is a sure sale. Be warned, however, that not all the cats here-in are good guys, nor do they all come to good ends. There is, for instance, Stephen King's grisly horror tale, "Cat From Hell," and Randall Garrett's otherwise excellent sf mystery about a murdered cat, "A Little Intelligence." Still, most of the stories are good, though of course those like Fritz Leiber's classic tale of Gummitch the super kitten ("Space Time for Springers") and Cordwainer Smith's far future fable about cats being mentally partnered with humans in order to make space travel possible ("The Game of Rat and Dragon") are the best and are almost worth the price of the book by themselves.

## HOW TO KEEP DINOSAURS

By Robert Mash  
Penguin, \$5.95

As the cover says, this is the "absolutely essential book for all dinosaur owners---and all those who want to be." It covers all sizes and shapes, from dinosaurs suitable for pets to those suitable only for well-equipped safari parks, and it's full of interesting and useful advice, such as the following, regarding *Camarasaurus*: "Detaching the

young from the flock is best accomplished by a skilled exponent of laso, or lariat, working from an armoured car driven by a movie stuntman." If dinosaurs still existed and if the late Will Cuppy were still around, he probably would've written this book himself. Its scientific accuracy, deadpan humor is at least a match for that in Cuppy's classic *HOW TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS FROM WOMBATS*, and there's not much higher praise than that.

## THEM BONES

By Howard Waldrop  
Ace Special, \$2.95 (Nov. '84)

In 1929, a Louisiana archeological expedition finds brass rifle cartridges and other anachronisms in an Indian mound dating from no later than the early 1500's, and they rush to evacuate what they can before the site is flooded by a new flood-control dam.

Meanwhile, in 2033, a dying, radiation-poisoned world attempts to send a group of soldiers back roughly 100 years in an attempt to change the history that led to their own doomed world, but none of them arrive where or when they planned. Most find themselves in the 14th or 15th century, unwittingly spreading diseases to which the Indians have no resistance and being warped upon as evil plague carriers. But one, Madison Yazoo Leake, finds himself in an odd world of indeterminate time where the local Indians worship the Great Woodpecker and are visited annually by Greek-speaking traders paddlewheeling up the Great River.

Told alternately from each of the times/locations, *THEM BONES* starts out like an excellent mixture of time travel, adventure and mystery, but, like almost all the new Ace Specials, there's more to it than that. There are a number of unexpected twists and turns, for instance, but more importantly, the quietly witty writing and the real and engaging characters (particularly the Indian pipe maker, Took-His-Time) and the fascinating settings keep a grip on you right from the start and make you hate to see it end.



## THE CREATURE FEATURES MOVIE GUIDE

By John Stanley  
Warner Books, \$7.95

More than just a collection of short "reviews" of 3,000 horror, sf and fantasy movies, this book not only points out some of the best and the worst of the lot but provides fascinating bits of background,

amusingly sarcastic commentaries, and a number of the more memorable lines, including my own long-time favorite from I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN, where scientist Whit Bissell says to his recently assembled creation, "Answer me! You have a civil tongue in your head! I know, I sewed it in there!"

## THE IVANHOE GAMBIT

THE TIMEKEEPER CONSPIRACY  
By Simon Hawke  
Ace, \$2.75 each.

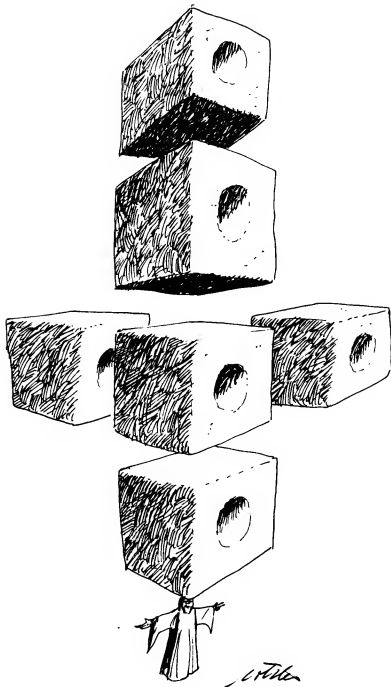
Billed as volumes 1 and 2 of the "Time Wars" series, these two fast-paced, fascinating and often tongue-in-cheek adventures seem to be a cross between Tim Powers' award-winning AMUBIS GATES and the departed TV time travel series VOYAGERS. A future society has formed an army of time travelers, including regular soldiers, commandoes, and various CIA-type groups, who go back in time to make sure that the time stream isn't "split" by various time-traveling villains who are out to change history.

While the adventure is well done and the hero and his friends are interesting enough, what really holds your interest are the warped versions of real and fictional figures that abound. In THE IVANHOE GAMBIT, for instance, there is of course Ivanhoe himself plus Lady Rowena, who turns out to be a total airhead, along with a drunken, forest-dwelling Klutz named Robin Hood, whose band of similarly drunken Merry Men are in truth led by a Maid Marion who has all the makings of a marine drill sergeant. In THE TIMEKEEPER CONSPIRACY, the Three Musketeers get similarly irreverent treatment. The tongue-in-cheek approach, however, never gets out of hand, and the characters are all believable and sympathetic and probably more "real" than the originals. In short, don't write this off as "just another numbered adventure series." If it continues at the same level as these first two, it could be a lot more than that.

## THE SHEPHERD MOON

By B.M. Hoover  
Viking, \$11.95

About three thousand years from now, Earth is just emerging from a new Dark Age, the result of a long war between Earth and the millions of inhabitants of its own artificially created moons. This future Earth as the first attempts by one of the still scientifically advanced moons to repossess it are seen through the oddly innocent eyes of thirteen-year-old Meredith Ambrose, one of the ruling elite. Part Young Adult adventure, part social commentary, THE SHEPHERD MOON is, most of all, a darkly vivid picture of a bleak but fascinating future world, and, like Heinlein's earlier works, it should appeal to adults as much as it does to the younger readers it's aimed at.



## INTERVIEW:

# ALGIS BUDRYS

## CONDUCTED BY MARK BERRY

Algis (A.J.) Budrys has generated quite a bit of respect among his fellow writers. Isaac Asimov says he is "an extremely intellectual science fiction writer who understands science fiction a lot better than I do." Harlan Ellison calls him "one of the best writers the field has ever produced."

He is not what one would call a prolific writer. In the course of a thirty-year career he has published only seven novels. This is because he will not write a book simply because there are bills to be paid. Budrys only tells a story if he feels it is truly worth telling.

He is perhaps best known for *ROGUE MOON*, which is considered a

classic in the field. Just as popular was his last novel *MICHAELMAS*. WHO? (which was made into a movie by the same name), published in 1958, is a masterful tale of alienation set against a chillingly accurate rendering of the Cold War mentality which is endemic to this day.

The best of Budrys' approximately 200 short stories are collected in the books *THE UNEXPECTED DIMENSION*, *BYDRYS' INFERNO* and *BLOOD & BURNING*.

Today Budrys is perhaps best known for his monthly book review column in *THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION*. As he explains during the interview, the books being reviewed are only in-

cidental to the column; they serve as a jumping-off point into any and all aspects of speculative fiction and the community that has grown up around it. His columns are incisive, intelligent and witty. I'm not alone in my praise of A.J.'s critical abilities. Marta Randall says "A.J. is one of the premier critics." Damon Knight, the dean of science fiction critics, calls him "the most ... rewarding science fiction critic I know."

Budrys is also a teacher. Every year he is one of the writers-in-residence at the Clarion Science Fiction Writers' Workshop, which to him is a labor of love. I might add that that love is reciprocated by his students. I speak from personal experience.

This was an interstate interview. Most of it was conducted inside a Dodge Colt during a trip from Detroit, where Budrys had attended a meeting of the Science Fiction Oral History Association, to his home in suburban Chicago.

SFB: It's been seven years since your last novel. Is there any particular reason why? What have you been up to?

BUDRYS: There are a number of reasons why. I guess the three main ones are that I was a little bit sick and didn't know it; physically sick, not mentally sick as most of my friends would have it, although the physical illness did have some mental effects. I was a borderline diabetic and with that came depression and spells of occasional confusion. It got to the point where I was spending all day writing one paragraph and thus barely getting my review column out once a month. Another reason was that I just didn't have a novel idea that fired me up well enough to get itself written. I think it's a significant feature of my life as a writer in the commercial market that I never write anything just because I can do it and just because it would pay me money. I'm not capable of doing that; I would gladly do it if I could. I have



to wait for the propulsion that you get from what you rightly or wrongly believe at the time to be a really Class-A idea. The other reason is that it's hard to invest the time that it takes to write a novel when the bills are coming in every month and you don't have a cushion on which to live.

What I have been doing is a lot of short stuff. I've been doing my review column for THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. I was doing a review column for the Chicago Sun-Times. I was also reviewing books for the American Library Association. It got to the point where I had dropped two of those things, just keeping the F&SF thing which I then increased twelve times a year from about nine or ten. I'm now doing a column for the Sun-Times on any kind of popular literature.

I've been putting together a book of my old GALAXY book reviews. That just went to the publisher January 23rd. That's something I am pretty excited about. It's 140,000 words, of which 110-120,000 words are actual old columns. The rest of it is new stuff, not all of which I wrote. There's an introduction by Fred Pohl and an introduction by Professor Catherine McClenahan of Marquette University. The whole thing has just suddenly jelled into such a nice package. It's much nicer and, we sneakily suspect, more important than we originally thought.

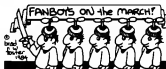
SFR: What type of market do you anticipate for this book?

BUDRYS: Well, there's the academic market. It's a seven-year slice out of the history of science fiction. The column started in early 1965 and ended in late 1971. Over the course of that it covered 161 books including BUG JACK BARRON, THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDITCH, DUNE, THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS and many, many others which are now standard works in the field. Plus there are things scattered through it that are important to the record of the history of this field. There are a dozen or so of my inimitable essays on what John Collier ... there's a John Collier short story called "Night Youth Paris And The Moon" which has no commas in the title. Either that or there's a John Collier story called "The Devil George and Rosie" which has no commas in the title. When I write one of these essays that's what it's about: everything, with no commas. There's also a piece of my journalism I'm very proud of. It describes my feelings on being trapped in Washington, D.C. the day that Martin Luther King was assassinated. It's also got a lot of

stuff which is characteristic of me -- you either love it or you hate it but it's outrageous, God knows. So it's got the entertainment value that my columns have for my readers.

SFR: When did you discover science fiction and what attracted you to it?

BUDRYS: I discovered science fiction sold as science fiction sometime in the second or third grade. They distributed to the students in my school a weekly or monthly paper called YOUNG AMERICA, which was one of your Scholastic publications, which was supposed to improve your mind. It had little



articles like what it was like in Venezuela, and little puzzles and jokes in the back. It always had a piece of fiction in it and month after month it was science fiction. I don't know who the editor was but whoever it was had a fondness for the science fiction of a now-forgotten writer named Carl H. Claudy. They also serialized things like AT THE EARTH'S CORE. It was the damndest thing and I just quivered. Now, why did I quiver? A couple of reasons: By then, I had run across Buck Rogers and Brick Bradford in the Sunday funnies. Very briefly. I was not allowed to read the Sunday funnies. The Sunday funnies were vulgar. But on vacation with my mother in Atlantic City I had gotten hold of some stuff that the landlady had left lying around where it could pollute my mind and I had seen one Buck Rogers strip and one Brick Bradford strip. This was to later pay off in a hopeless addiction to Brick Bradford. I used to connive and steal Brick Bradford funnies. But Buck Rogers made an impression on me because on the end papers of my copy of ROBINSON CRUSOE is a four-panel comic strip drawn in my best seven-year-old approximation of Buck Rogers' style. You can tell it's a Buck Rogers flitter because it's got this huge goddamn tailfin on it. It looked like a '57 Plymouth. There are two guys in it and they are flitting around zapping things.

ROBINSON CRUSOE was the first book that I ever read. I read the original Defoe text. It filled me

full of questions. What is this relationship with God that this poor idiot has? And then I realized that there was something wrong with a guy who had to chop down an entire tree and cut away everything that was not one plank. This guy had the wrong handle on how things were done. But it was man in an alien environment.

My sister who was French, my unofficially adopted sister, read to me the aviation books of Antoine de St-Exupery. These are all about men on the edge of the frontier operating cranky machinery in aid of higher purposes. There's a lot of the same thing in them that's in a lot of science fiction and speculative fiction in general. I was pretty well predisposed to that.

People have said ad nauseum that I write about alienation and that I myself being an alien, this all makes a lot of sense. And it's true, it does make a lot of sense. I'm sick of hearing it but that doesn't change the fact that it's absolutely true. I've never been at home anywhere. I'm an aggravated case of the kind of social isolation that you find in the childhoods and the later years of many people in the SF community. It's trite but it's true. I was looking for someplace where I could be at home, someplace where the alien was accepted and speculative fiction ... you find that with a great, glad cry.

The other thing is that I was very bright. I cannot dispute that and I see no point in hiding behind false modesty. Hell, I was in college by the time I was sixteen. They kept finding out what my I.Q. was and promoting me before I ever had a chance to warm the seat in the class they boosted me up out of.

So science fiction was one of the very few places where you could find the kind of vocabulary and the kind of literary concepts that would challenge me. I was bright as hell and I was naive and uneducated as hell. True serious, far-ranging, deeply insightful literature was over my head because I did not have the vocabulary of concepts and the vocabulary of allusions that supports that kind of thing.

But in science fiction, on the one hand you've got this nice, simple, hard-driving plot -- particularly the science fiction of the late 1930s -- coupled with very sophisticated concepts that you can grasp entirely if you've got the reason. That was one of the major appeals of it and I don't know if enough has ever been made of that

point about the attractiveness of science fiction.

SFR: Which writers influenced you most when you started writing?

BUDRYS: Lester Del Rey, Clifford Simak, Ted Sturgeon ... the sentimental slobs of science fiction, because I was a sentimental slob.

SFR: In the early '50s, when you started publishing, what were your goals as a writer?

BUDRYS: To become rich, famous, universally loved and laid six or seven times a day by Rita Hayworth. I wanted a white convertible. I wanted the doorman at the finest nightclub in Hollywood to not only know my name but grovel at my feet as he flipped the door open. And I wanted Rita Hayworth to be incapable of being in the same room with me without tearing off her clothes. That's an exact statement of what I wanted.

SFR: That sounds perfectly reasonable. What are your goals today?

BUDRYS: It's no longer Rita Hayworth.

SFR: Who is it?

BUDRYS: Not to be entirely flippant about it, if the world fell at my feet this minute I would consider it no more than my due. But I realize full well in the rational part of my mind that I couldn't handle it if that happened. It's not my bag. I am here to do the kind of work that makes me feel good to have done it. I don't know what my standards are, I don't know what my criteria are for good work beyond this purely emotional response: This was a good sentence and a good paragraph and a piece of work that needed doing. If I get that, then I'm happy. At the same time I'm extremely frustrated when monthly bill-paying time comes around because I somehow feel that the world should have sufficiently rewarded me for this nobility on my part so that the goddamn bill collectors would please go away. But in all truth I don't deserve that. I'm not giving the world what it wants, I'm giving the world what I want and I ought to be damn grateful that the world lets me live at all.

SFR: You've published approximately 200 short stories.

BUDRYS: That's what I tell people. I've never counted them.

SFR: Okay. You've published a lot of short stories. Any favorites?

BUDRYS: Yeah. The story I tell everybody was my first sale, "Walk To The World," came out in SPACE SCIENCE FICTION a couple of weeks after my real first sale which is a story called "The High Purpose." "Walk To The World" is still to this day ... it's crude; I would not write it exactly that way today, but I would write it today. And people would buy it, no matter whose name was signed to it.

WHO? ROGUE MOON and MICHAELMAS are three novels that I really like. I reread them quite often. A novel that very few other people like but which contains a great many things that I'm just absolutely nuts about is THE IRON THORN. I tend to think that someday people will realize that it's not a failure. It is a successful attempt at doing something that nobody ever expected me to try to do. It's lightweight but it's not flippant and it is not clumsy. I like it a lot.

I'm down heavily on my second published novel, MAN OF EARTH. I can't stand to read it; I will not allow anybody to reprint it in English under any circumstances. I renewed the copyright on it only so I could suppress anybody's attempt to steal it.

There are a bunch of stories that I really like. Some of them though, I've gotten heartily sick of. I'm sick to death of "Nobody Bothers Gus." I hope nobody ever reprints it again. I've made a small fortune off reprints of it and I really don't ever want to do it again. But it's a good story, or it was.

I like the novel I'm working on now. That's going to be a little pistol if I do it right. It's not going to be such a little pistol either.

I've written a heroic fantasy that I've sold to Ed Ferman for the Budrys issue of P&SF. And I've got a story in one of the upcoming volumes of THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS, which is a damn good story.

SFR: That's assuming that TLDV ever comes out.

BUDRYS: Harlan assures me that it's coming out as a series of small anthologies starting right about now. (Spring '84) Harlan and I have kissed and made up and I believe him. Actually, we did not kiss full on the mouth, you understand.

SFR: But you wouldn't rule that out?

BUDRYS: No.



SFR: Over the past 30 years you have written SF, edited SF, taught beginning writers how to write SF and have been one of the foremost critics of SF. What is this thing we call science fiction?

BUDRYS: Well, there is a thing called speculative fiction which is the fiction of belief in the need to change the universe. There's mundane fiction which is fiction based on the opinion that the universe does not change or that change is to be feared, hated and prevented. It is the fiction of stability. And that's true even when it's about violence being done to stability, even when it involves events in which the world is tottering. Always the unspoken assumption behind that is what you're driving for is either to restore the good things that were or to make the best possible compromise out of the ruins that will give you back what was in essence.

Speculative fiction is constantly fascinated by questions such as "What if?" "If this goes on how will the world be?" Behind this there's the implication that the world will be exciting and interesting. Change is inherently exciting to speculative fiction fans. Change is full of promise whereas for fans of mundane fiction change is automatically full of fear.

It so happens that in the 20th Century we have developed a form of speculative fiction that has been labeled science fiction. I think that the thing we now call science fiction is the literature of belief in the efficacy of science and fantasy is the belief in the efficacy of magic. But if you look at it that way you can see that they are both branches of a literature of belief in the value of change.

I see no conflict between science fiction and newsworld fantasy. I can see all kinds of theoretical constructs that allow me to take a nice, quiet, unified view of what it all comes from and where it's all going and I can't understand why other people don't realize how right I am and just fall right into line and stop these useless heated debates on questions that have been

settled. I just wish they'd continue to read my column and continue to read my books as I plan to publish them and get all of the answers from me, like they're supposed to.

**SFR:** What do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of the science fiction genre?

**BUDRYS:** It's a genre of speculative fiction, not a --

**SFR:** You prefer the term speculative fiction.

**BUDRYS:** Yeah. I wish I could find some way to pronounce "sf" that doesn't sound wimpy or stupid or forced. Forry Ackerman has given us a very valuable thing in inventing the term "Sci-fi." It's a horrendous term but it's a handy term. Unfortunately, it's restricted only to science fiction so we can't use it.

The strength of it is this business of being able to speculate on change, of being able to cast change in a favorable light and then, depending on the intentions and the depth of intellect of the author, of probing increasingly real-seeming alternative futures or alternative milieus.

That's another thing. I've called speculative fiction a literature of milieus because essentially what it has to do with is the situation in which the protagonists find themselves.

The weakness is that it's reversed from the way most recognized classical literature is constructed. In classical literature a unique hero and supporting players move against a known background, a social background that everybody knows existed. They take the author's word for it that when he's describing the city of Detroit in the 20th Century or the city of Babylon in Biblical times that that's pretty much how Detroit is or Babylon was and that the people moving across the stage are moving in a real place. And they can be unique then. The things they do can be contrasted to the things the ordinary guy would do. We can then detect what the differences are between those people and ordinary people. We are free to let our minds roam among those possibilities. We empathize with these people, we measure them against ourselves, and we learn something about the human condition from watching the way these people react.

In speculative fiction it's the other way around. The settings are unique. They are places that either have never existed at all, places that might exist but don't exist, places that may have existed but nobody ever went to look at them. Consequently, the people have to be a little less unique because if you have unique people in a unique setting you cannot tell how out of the ordinary that action is.

"Charley Smith crossed the room and walked up the wall." What does that sentence mean? Did this happen in Detroit in 1984 in a perfectly ordinary room with a perfectly ordinary-seeming guy walking up the wall? Or did this happen on board a space station? In the one case Charley Smith becomes a figure of unique interest. Here's a man with a terrific capability which needs to be examined and exploited if possible. In the other case Charley Smith is an ordinary guy doing an ordinary thing and what needs to be exploited for its interest is the environment which allows him to do this.

The weakness there is that most people who read, even convinced science fiction readers, are not used to the foreground figure being an archetype. They automatically feel that fiction with archetypal figures in it is fiction with cardboard characters and is a literature of ideas, which seems like a nice idea until you stop to realize that's a way of saying it is a literature which avoids dealing with people. Which is the logical corollary of what you've just said and yet is dead wrong! It's still about people, it's just about people in a different way from a different direction. But it's the reason why so many people shy away from it to some extent, the reason why they feel it's not as much a literature as mundane literature is. It's only a matter of the way they have been conditioned to regard literature.

**SFR:** So the characters in speculative fiction have to be recognizable as "normal" people --

**BUDRYS:** Yeah. They have to be recognizable people. They have to be "types." That's why they are drawn a little bit broader and why they have slightly less range of visible emotion. Because the minute they go fully unique in a fully unique environment you then have a hell of a time showing the reader what's normal and what isn't. The reader stops being able to decide whether Charley Smith has gone insane or not. The suspension of disbelief breaks and you've lost them.

If you're going to create the illusion of thoroughgoing character development in a piece of speculative fiction you have to be very, very patient and very meticulous. You have to be very, very careful not to contradict any of the things that sustain the suspension of willing disbelief.

**SFR:** In what ways has the genre evolved in the last 30 years?

**BUDRYS:** It's had a massive infusion of conventional literary values. It's had to really paddle its feet in an awful big hurry to assimilate these things and make them speculative before it drowned in all of these furnishings, before it swamped in mundanity and lost its unique strengths. And that's happened a lot. There are some writers around who come extremely close to writing in a mundane story with only science fictional trappings on it. It used to be a science fiction story was a Western with ray guns in it. What we're getting now are some science fiction stories which are Chekhov novels with ray guns in them. A name I might mention is Michael Bishop, who is a very talented, bright and in many ways a likeable guy. But he's one of the writers I can think of who is coming very close to this situation.

**SFR:** Where is science fiction at today?

**BUDRYS:** It's healthier than hell and proliferating like mad. I think there are many more different kinds of science fiction than there ever have been. I think there are more talented writers in SF than there ever have been at any one given time. I even like the publishing climate. And I realize that a lot of this is heretical as hell but I think we're in a pretty good shape. I think we have weathered, for instance, the onslaught of the Romances and the non-books and have done something I wasn't sure we would be able to do: We've carved out a permanent niche in big-time publishing for speculative fiction. Even during the years of the boom of five or six years ago, when they were tossing around the half-million dollar advances, I wasn't sure that that would happen. And sure enough, that boom collapsed and yet there are extremely extensive science fiction publishing programs, extremely extensive fantasy publishing programs. There are all kinds of maneuverings going on within the speculative fiction publishing industry which are pretty strong evidence that the publishers feel there's a hell of a lot of money to be made there. So I think



we've done the thing that the mystery novel did: We've carved a place for ourselves. There will always be a significant market and the nature of speculative fiction being what it is it will always be a literarily important market whereas things like the crime market are only sporadically important and then only in the case of isolated examples.

**SFR:** Where do you see science fiction going in the next decade or so?

**BUDRYS:** I think it will become a greater and greater amalgam of traditional literature and the kind of thing that Hugo Gernsback began. I think the possible perils of all this have to do with losing the vitality and unique drives in speculative fiction in favor of just pure literary adornment. I think that we will probably be able to escape that particular dragon as we have escaped all the others.

**SFR:** Didn't that dragon show up back during the "New Wave"?

**BUDRYS:** Yeah. And we did escape it, and not only did we escape it but we managed to assimilate a fair number of good things about it and turned them to what I see as more viable purposes. And we learned an important lesson. We learned that it was possible for intelligent people with highly organized thinking mechanisms to look at speculative fiction in essentially an entirely new way, call a lot of traditional values into question and to substitute new ones. That is a very important lesson to have learned and it's something that we can now bear in the backs of our minds every time we decide that we've finally got it right. I think we can bet for sure that right about that time there's a whole bunch of very talented, witty people lurking in the underbrush getting ready to rip our clothes off again.

**SFR:** There are a couple of interesting similarities between you and the character of Martino in *WHO?* To what extent, if any, is Martino based on you?

**BUDRYS:** Well, what similarities do you see?

**SFR:** Martino is essentially a man without a country. He is not from the East, the West doesn't accept him. You're from an Eastern country which in effect no longer exists, having been annexed by the U.S.S.R. You are not an American citizen. I have read that you said Colonel Azarin was modeled after your father.

**BUDRYS:** The similarity to my father on the part of a particular character I don't see as a thematic similarity. I needed a pretty good picture of a working military intelligence officer. That is what my father had been, as it happened, for the Imperial Russian Army for many years and then for the Free Lithuanian government with the responsibilities commensurate with a colonel's rank. It would have been foolish for me to model Azarin on anybody else.

Martino is indeed an alienated individual who's had his identity stripped off and who comes from a background that is not quite assimilated into the great middle-American, *READER'S DIGEST* ideal of what an American is. He comes from an ethnic minority. As I say in the book, he doesn't even speak English correctly until he gets into school. His first language was Italian. So to that extent there are similarities to my background, but not very many. There's only that central similarity that he's alienated and I'm alienated. Well, the whole damn book is about alienation and the presumption in writing such a book is that there are hundreds of thousands, hopefully millions, of readers out there who can respond to this. So it's a pretty broad similarity at that point. What you ought to be asking me about are the similarities to the hero in *THE FALLING TORCH*.

**SFR:** A question just occurred to me: What are the similarities between A.J. Budrys and the hero of *THE FALLING TORCH*?

**BUDRYS:** *THE FALLING TORCH* presupposes a successful invasion and occupation of Earth by an alien race who happen to resemble earthmen very closely. The occupation took place at the time that Earth had already successfully planted colonists on a planet of Alpha Centaurus and as colonists had developed their own civilization to the point where they were in the position of America vis-a-vis Europe. It was an exact one-to-one analogy. The President of Earth, his family and some of his closest advisors got away from Earth in one of the last ships before the aliens closed everything down, landed in this other system and set up housekeeping as members of the Centaurian culture but always with an eye to coming back and liberating Earth. Eventually, the son of the President is sent back to Earth to foment revolution, to act as liaison between the government-in-exile and the guerrillas in the mountains of, as it turns out, Pennsylvania.



Okay. We know from the beginning of the book that the guy was successful, that he did indeed liberate Earth, although from the beginning of the book we can't tell how he did that. And unfortunately, the way the book is written we can't tell that even by reading the whole book.

Everybody I know, with the exception of people whose ears I've had a chance to bend on this, assumes that this is a piece of wish fulfillment on my part. This is how come, I'm sure, a lot of reference-book entries on me refer to me as the son of a representative of the Lithuanian government-in-exile. But that's not the way it was. The analogy is only accidentally to part of my situation and to the situation of Lithuania under Soviet occupation, or in fact having been incorporated into the Soviet Union. Again, there were things in my life I would have been crazy not to use. Some of the most successful parts of the book are the culture of the emigres on the Centaurian planet, the way some of them adapt successfully to the culture and others lead extremely marginal and embittered lives. You can find that in any emigre colony. Among the White Russians, for instance, who have been in the United States since the Soviet revolution you find the ones who can't make a living except by operating gypsy tea rooms and ballet schools and who are constantly meeting with each other and crying and mourning over this revolution and sort of wistfully hoping that somehow the Czars will be restored in spite of the fact that at this point the position is ludicrous. In fact, I don't suppose there are many Czarists left although I would be terribly surprised if there weren't a bunch of them hidden away somewhere. These things never die. There are still people interested in restoring the French monarchy.

*THE FALLING TORCH* is actually about Genghis Khan. And it is about how people get to be charismatic leaders and it is based on a similarity I noticed among such leaders as Genghis Khan, his remote shirttail cousin Tamerlane, The Great, Napoleon, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Also Abraham Lincoln.

**SFR:** That's a strange group.

**BUDRYS:** Take a look at the similarities. Not one of them was native to the culture that he wound up ruling. Not one of them was anything less than a dictator. Each acted in a completely arbitrary manner. Roosevelt ran the New Deal through, tried to ram through a complete change in the Supreme Court. Would have, if he'd had Abraham Lincoln's testicles, suspended the right of habeas corpus. Would have done anything in order to achieve his ends. Roosevelt, as a patron, a descendant of the Dutch colonists in the United States and heir to that entire cultural tradition, hardly seems likely to be the big ruler of the Populist movement that overturned the political structure of this country and did everything it could to reverse the deleterious effects of the Depression, but that's what he did.

Abraham Lincoln was a country bumpkin from the frontier and came back ruling Washington society and urbanizing this country left and right. The cultural breakthrough in this country from agriculture to urban civilization comes from Abraham Lincoln.

Joseph Stalin was a Georgian, a complete outsider to the circles of power that centered on Moscow. Tamerlane The Great and Genghis Khan were essentially the same thing.

There's another similarity: All of them were disfigured. Tamerlane and Genghis Khan had been shot in the leg with arrows and limped forever. Joseph Stalin had the world's worst case of acne, was hideously pitted. All of his photographs and paintings are retouched. Abraham Lincoln was spectacularly ugly. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was paralyzed with polio.

That is why the hero of THE FALLING TORCH has these really spectacular attention-getting ears. That is why any number of things happen to him in the woods and fields. The only problem with the book is that in the four chapters that are missing from it is where I was going to bring him up from the point where he decides that he must become the master of the world to the point where he accomplishes that.

None of these people had any choice. Every one of these people were in a situation where it was conquer the world or die, become the man in charge or be obliterated.

**SFR:** Ordinary people under extraordinary circumstances.

**BUDRYS:** Right. I'm convinced that

many of us come to these break points where there is no compromise; it's either/or and of course, we never hear about the losers. And the winners run the world.

(THE FALLING TORCH) was never finished because I desperately needed the money that I would get for turning in the completed manuscript so I faked the completed manuscript. It's the most popular book I've ever written, without question. It was in print continuously from the middle of 1958 to sometime around 1980. The only thing that happened was they changed the cover painting and raised the price. They never advertised it. They never even put it in the house ads in the backs of other science fiction books and it sold a third of a million copies. By sheer word of mouth.

**SFR:** I would have thought that WHO? or ROGUE MOON would have beaten it out.

**BUDRYS:** Well, they're far better known and someday they may creep past that mark. WHO? and ROGUE MOON have seen a lot of editions over the years. MICHAELMAS is doing reasonably well, though it's not doing as well as I thought it would.

**SFR:** I understand you were pretty upset when A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ won the 1961 Hugo instead of ROGUE MOON.

**BUDRYS:** Yeah. At the time, I was positive that CANTICLE was not eligible. It turns out that on a technicality it was.

What I was really ticked off about was I don't think A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ is a good book. I think it is a very good short story. I think the book, particularly for a writer of Walt Miller's ability,

is, is a disappointing book. I think the logic in it is shot, I think the plotting is extremely weak and he finally does a faintly acceptable variation on "It was all a dream, or was it?" It begins with atomic doom and ends with atomic doom. He sets the world on fire again to get out of his story problems.

But I knew I didn't stand a chance against it because it's a fanishly attractive book for a variety of reasons that I don't need to go into.

I had spent years building ROGUE MOON into the quintessential science fiction novel. Not fan-fish, just science fiction. I had spent years thinking about the possibilities that are inherent in science fiction. I had invested an enormous amount in that novel. I got fifteen hundred bucks for it and it took me three years. I grant you that Walt Miller didn't get all that much more for A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ, at least not to begin with. And I grant you that he worked hard on his book. But that didn't prevent me from being pretty goddamn upset when it got a Hugo that I didn't think it deserved on a couple of counts, and which I still don't think it deserves on its merits.

Now, on the other hand, WHO? got blown out of the water by A CASE OF CONSCIENCE, another religious book I might point out. And that was fair and square. A CASE OF CONSCIENCE is a much more important book in the history of science fiction than WHO? is. I'm not sure that A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ can make the same claim with regard to ROGUE MOON.

**SFR:** You've recently started using a word processor. Has that had an effect on your writing?

**BUDRYS:** Yeah. There's more of it. It's, I think, better, cleaner writing. My last few book review columns have been turned out on the word processor and I think it's helped them. I'm working on a novel and I think it's being helped by all of this.

A word processor falls in beautifully with my habitual working methods which have always been to roll a sheet of paper into the typewriter and start working on the scene, as soon as I knew what it was going to be, and I'd get three or four sentences down and I'd go back up and begin revising sentence one shortly after typing sentence three. I'd go back to sentence four and back to sentence two. I'd get into the second paragraph and I'd have afterthoughts about the





first paragraph. Eventually, I'd turn out an opaque sheet of paper with little arrows and red lines running all over it. I was essentially using word processing methods all the time that I was using these antiquated, dinosaurian things called typewriters.



**SFR:** You have been a writer-in-residence at the Clarion Writers' Workshop since 1977 so you obviously think writing can be taught.

**BUDRYS:** Yep.

**SFR:** Many people would dispute that.

**BUDRYS:** You can't teach talent. And you can't teach even the talented person who refuses to be taught. But if you come across a talented person who is willing to be taught, who is willing to assimilate, or at least consider assimilating the suggestions you give about how stories work, about how writing is put together, if they're willing to accept first of all that there is structure, that there is craftsmanship that can govern structure, that there are ways to accomplish effects in a reader by manipulating the structure, if you can get all of that accepted by the talented person, then that talented person will in fact become a writer much faster than that person would have on his or her own. What you're really doing is saving them time. You're saving them from some blind alleys. You're fulfilling the same function that the old pulp editors used to fulfill, a function that is no longer being carried out by the newer editors.

**SFR:** Every year you spend a hot summer week at Michigan State University teaching at Clarion. What do you get out of it?

**BUDRYS:** Instruction. I learn more every time. Satisfaction. I'm passing on whatever wisdom I have, and of course the act of passing it on and watching all those smiling, receptive faces validates it and probably makes it seem more important than it really is. That is what I get out of it. And a few hugs and kisses.

**SFR:** What's the most important knowledge you attempt to impart to beginning writers?

**BUDRYS:** That stories do have a logic to them, that they are engineered in that sense. It's entirely possible to write stories without being conscious of that, and that's why you get writers who claim it's all done by inspiration. But that's only, as far as I'm concerned, because they are such good engineers that they don't think about what they're doing; they don't have to.

I'm not sure that you can build a career on that. I'm pretty sure that if you've gotten to the point where you feel you need to be at Clarion you're dissatisfied with whatever mechanisms you have to generate stories. Therefore, it's my job to present you with the theoretical construct that there is a way of processing an idea into a story. You wouldn't be a writer in the first place if you didn't have a mechanism that was constantly filling your mind with ideas. Your problem is, presumably, that you cannot successfully translate those ideas into something that the world will accept as a story. You come to Clarion because you're not selling. You come to Clarion because you're not making the impression you want to make. You've got the ideas; how do you translate the ideas into stories? That's what I'm there to tell you. And that's the most important thing: the fact that there is such a thing, and after that what that thing is.

**SFR:** When God gathers all the science fiction writers together for judgment and She, He or It demands that you justify your career, how will you respond?

**BUDRYS:** Justify my career? Well, if I'm talking to Her, presumably She exists, I would say to Her, "You gave it to me and why didn't you give me Frank Herbert's?"

**SFR:** How would you characterize your style?

**BUDRYS:** Eclectic. No two of my books are alike. A lot of my short stories are alike but that's because they came closer together in time. Even so, I can clearly see a difference between a 1980 Budrys story, if there were such a thing, and a 1950 Budrys story.

But to give you a straighter answer: It's a straightforward style. I tell the story pretty much as you would see it if you were equipped with a camera and a microphone. Sometimes you would have to be able to move those instruments inside those people's heads, in some stories not. *ROGUE MOON*, for instance, was written deliberately without ever going inside anybody's head until *Hawks* went into the Moon thing. And even so, everything he thinks is purely literal. He does not react to what he sees, he just reacts to himself what he's seeing. He's being his own camera and microphone.

I very rarely use experimental prose, but I will do some wild and crazy things. In *WHO?* there is a scene that takes place entirely as a radio play. It is the scene in which the various law enforcement people are spying on Martino as he calls on his old girlfriend. I did that for Jim Blish. I knew Jim would catch it and I put it in there for him to find. I forget why, but I did that. And then because I had done that in *WHO?* I stuck a little television play or a little bit of movie script into *THE IRON THORN*. I'll occasionally write a paragraph or two in blank verse to get a particular effect. All of my passages are very metric-al. I'll sacrifice cleancut, good clear description in one crisp but, to me, awkward sentence for two rounded sentences. I'll do that every time because I like to hear the stuff rolling along in my head in a particular way and when I come to the end of a sentence I want a metrical thump because that's where I'll usually put the most important word in the sentence. I want the reader to feel that word come thumping in.

But I will not usually do stream-of-consciousness, I will not usually switch tenses, I will not do the kind of thing that is usually referred to as experimental fiction. I will disguise all my experiments as cleancut, straight Kipling-esque prose. In fact, I'm not at all sure they are.

**SFR:** After a seven-year hiatus you are writing a new novel. Can you tell us anything about it?

**BUDRYS:** It is the science fiction novel that would have been written as a collaboration between Len Deighton and Richard Condon. (Long pause)

**SFR:** Is that all you're going to say about it?

**BUDRYS:** That's all I'm going to say about it.

**SFR:** You're also working on a contemporary science novel?

**BUDRYS:** Yeah, but that's on the back burner. Its problem is that too many people know that it could be a sure-fire best seller and they keep telling me how to write it and they keep preparing to merchandise it in a particular way. I don't blame them, that's their job, that's the way I sold it to them in the first place. I went to them and said, "Look, fellas, we're all gonna make a lot of money out of this one, so let's get ready to do it." That was my mistake, my fault, and I'll never do that again because it did make it practically

impossible for me to actually write the novel. That was for two reasons, one of them being that a lot of the steam got sapped out of the idea from talking too much about it to people and the other is that every time I hit on a viable way to write it and start, some editor or some merchandiser tells me how to improve it. Or the market climate shifts and the way that would have made it sure-fire two years ago is no longer operative and we've got to go back. I was always told that it was a bad idea to deliberately write a best seller. Now I know why. So maybe someday I'll finish it, but in order to finish it I'll have to establish a position in which I'm the only person who has any input into what goes on the paper.

SFR: You're also working on a text on how to write science fiction. There have been many such books published in recent years. How will yours be different?

BUDRYS: It's going to be by me.

SFR: Now that you're writing fiction again is the trend going to continue?

BUDRYS: Yeah, that's what I really want to do and the word processor makes it simpler. Just the simple physical fatigue of typing is gone from my life. The constant typing and retyping and retyping. I've destroyed large parts of my body just typing many, many years ago. I started out typing one-fingered when I was seven or eight years old. I scavenged a typewriter out of my father's office and I learned to type by hitting all the keys with my right index finger, which is at least an eighth of an inch shorter than my left index finger at this point. I typed like that until I was twenty-seven or twenty-eight. I was up to sixty words per minute. People used to come from miles away to watch me. But while I was writing *ROGUE MOON* my right shoulder just went and at that point I just went out and bought an electric portable. I took two weeks out and got hold of a book called *TYPING MADE SIMPLE* and I taught myself how to use all ten fingers on the keyboard. The minute I could do that I launched myself into finishing *ROGUE MOON*. I never learned to touch-type, I never learned the confidence that allows you to lift your eyes off your fingers. So to this day I can't look at the screen while I'm doing the word processing.

Eventually even with electric typewriters it got to the point where with the retyping and retyping both of my shoulders calcified. I've got all kinds of rocks buried between the muscles of my shoulders. Having the word pro-

cessor and being able to lean back in the chair and put my feet up and twiddle my fingers on the keyboard ... oh, man, that's heaven!

SFR: Thank you, Algis Budrys.

# # #

As the interview wound down we found ourselves halfway between Detroit and Chicago, still three hours away. I mentioned to A.J. that I had at least one hour of blank tape left and he suggested that he tell how he got started as a book reviewer. Whether he did this for posterity or to take his attention away from my driving I'm not sure. (I used to be a paramedic and tend to drive like my little car has flashing red lights and a siren. For some reason this seems to discomfit my passengers.)

Whatever the reason, A.J. related the following. It is a piece of SF history and I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

# # #

This is a story which I guess now can be told.

I had been doing some book reviewing. For instance, my first book review appeared in *ASTOUNDING* in the middle 1950s. It was a review of an anthology of Ivan Yefremov's Russian science fiction stories. The book had been imported into this country by somebody that John Campbell knew. He gave me the book to review and I did a little thing and it was a filler at the bottom of a page somewhere. I can't retrieve it, it's not listed in the index. I can't find out what issue it was in. I still have the book. And I did that because John wanted a review of that book. I was heavily influenced by Damon Knight and his magazine reviews and after the first Milford Science Fiction Conference in Milford, back in the middle 1950s, Damon and Lester del Rey and Jim Blish and I put together a magazine called *SF FORUM* which survives today as a publication of *SFWA*. The *FORUM* in those days was co-edited by Lester and Damon as a magazine of reviews. What we did was review every story in every issue of every science fiction magazine, for the improvement of the breed and the clarification of the situation. It took hardly any time at all before we had alienated everybody we knew. And we fell to bickering among ourselves; we said some amazingly stupid things in print, as a matter of fact. The *SF FORUM* contains a long essay by Jim Blish on Robert Heinlein, of all people. It has to do with *THE DOOR INTO SUMMER* and builds up this elaborate thesis about Heinlein's methods and the

reason *THE DOOR INTO SUMMER* is written the way it is and points out that this is the first time that Heinlein has paid attention to one of science fiction's major themes, time travel. Now, Jim had apparently forgotten a little story called "By His Bootstraps." So I don't blame Heinlein for feeling that there was something wrong with the whole concept of criticizing science fiction in this manner. I don't think Heinlein ever wrote in and did anything about that although Heinlein is a person who does not suffer slings and arrows mutely. But he's a gentleman, he's always been a gentleman, and he does it in a characteristic way.

What happened, some years later, was Fred Pohl, of course being very well aware of *FORUM*, was very well aware of the fact that I worked on it. Some years later Fred becomes the editor of *GALAXY* and his book reviewer, a fellow named Floyd C. Gale, who was Horace Gold's brother, and he had inherited Floyd from Horace.

And Floyd Gale, who was a very bright and conscientious guy, had been assigned the mission by Horace of reviewing as many books as possible and never saying anything that would make anybody mad because the purpose of the review column was to generate advertising from book publishers. So Floyd has this real quickie buyer's guide. He covered 33 titles in a column and the column would be about two pages long.

So in comes the new Heinlein novel, the major Heinlein novel, the Heinlein novel everybody had been waiting for. It's called *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND*. I do not know what process of rationality Fred went through but he got ahold of me and said, "Look, there's this new Heinlein novel. I would like you to review it. I need about 2000 words worth of review and I'll give you 75 bucks for it and I want you to review this book." So I read the book. The first half of it was without doubt the finest modern science fiction novel ever written. I'm sitting there, the author or *ROGUE MOON*, the finest, quintessential science fiction novel ever written up to that time and the guy has me beat all hollow. He has reached into the very heart of speculative fiction. He has dressed it up with the science fiction trappings. He is proceeding full steam ahead with a masterpiece; the definitive SF novel. Halfway through it I'm foaming at the mouth; it is so beautiful, so lovely. I turn the page and it is as if someone had taken a bucket of some cold, glutinous substance and poured it over my

head. The back half of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND is as bad as any Jack Woodford novel ever written.

Jack Woodford was a culture hero of the 1930s, writing soft-core porn novels which contained no believable characters in no believable situations, mouthing lines that had been forced into them by the author who had absolutely no conception of how fiction is to be written. A self-taught, ham-handed practitioner who was able to sell his stuff only because every college boy in the world thrilled to it.

And here is Robert Anson Heinlein doing exactly the same fucking thing. It wasn't that he was pushing this particular religion, it wasn't that he was pushing this particular view of reincarnation. I was kind of taken by that. I don't mind that the man says something which, if he walked up to you on the street and tried to hand you a pamphlet about it and sign you up, you'd tell him to get lost. A novel is the place for that kind of thing. And, as a matter fact, what he had to say about Michael Valentine Smith and his inevitable doom and the nature of the world strikes me as very valid social observation. It taught me a great many things about charismatic religion. I've no quarrel with that. And I admire him for having organized all that in his mind and having been able to expound it in a coherent manner.

What I do mind is the fact that he threw out the window all of his skills that he had developed in characterization and dialogue writing, all of the techniques that he had worked up, and he had started maneuvering his characters baldly and boldly and creating a polemic. He had broken his bargain, he was no longer being an entertainer. He was being a didacticist. And he was resorting to scenes like the one in which everybody says, "Poor dear Marge, she's fifty years old, she's sure that she's past it all. Let's all climb into bed at once and reassure her." Come on! This is masturbatory fiction. This is not the creation of anything like what Robert Heinlein had taught us to write like.

I said things like that in my review. Not as vehemently, but I said them. I felt I owed it to the readers. I felt I owed it to Heinlein. I felt I owed it to myself. I felt I owed it to speculative fiction. And I turned it in. And Fred liked it, he admired it as a review. I think he was pleasantly surprised at how well I had read the book and organized my thinking. I really do. I think that.

As the editor of GALAXY, a man who was therefore about to destroy the possibility that Robert A. Heinlein would ever sell him another story, he was in another boat entirely.

I'm not clear now on exactly what it was he did. I don't know whether he sent Heinlein a copy of the review or whether he wrote him a letter and described it to him or whether he simply wrote him a letter and said, "Bob, I think you ought to know that Algis Budrys has written an unfavorable review of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND and I'm thinking of running it in the magazine." And Heinlein wrote back, and as Fred has described the letter to me, if I can recall it now, more or less exactly ... despite the fact that Heinlein and I had met at Seattle and had spent two days admiring each other, spent a lot of time together at the Seattle WorldCon. And despite the fact that Heinlein had declared to me that I was robbed on the Hugo balloting, Heinlein proposed the theory that because I was a foreigner I hadn't really understood the English language in the book. That, if I recall, is something like what he said.

Besides proposing that because I had this foreign name and therefore might be clumsy with the English language, besides proposing that I hadn't been able to understand the prose of his book he said to Fred, "I would not for a minute attempt to censor this man's right to say whatever he wants to say. It's his opinion and he's entitled to it and you're entitled to publish it in your magazine. You paid him to do it, he did it, and you're entitled to publish it. However, I am a subscriber and would it be possible to omit from my subscription the issue in which that review appears?" And that was all he said.

Well, Fred didn't run the review. I don't blame him. It's tough enough keeping a science fiction magazine going. At any time. You never get any advertising to support it; you do it entirely on the basis of selling to the readers. Distribution being the way it is you can't even build up that much of a loyal following. There have been more recent solutions to that problem. AMIMOV'S, ANALOG and F&SF now depend for most of their sales on their subscribers. GALAXY and ASTOUNDING at that time were not set up that way. They were depending on newsstand sales. Newsstand sales demanded the appearance on the cover of sure-fire selling names. You just were not going to make it, you were not going to get enough readers, if you

did not have a name like Heinlein to stick on the cover once in a while. You were cutting your own throat for good. And Fred was entitled to feel that if he cut Heinlein off the front cover of the magazine he was cutting an awful lot of other writers out of a place where they could get their stories published. I don't blame him. He didn't ask me to rewrite the review. He didn't ask me to take it back. He didn't even look at me funny and say, "A.J., you idiot." What he said to me was, "You did an honest job. Now I've got to cope with the results." Fred, as far as I'm concerned, came out of that situation looking golden. I gained a lot of respect for Fred. I had put him in a box and he had figured out a viable way to handle it. He just plain didn't run the review, and that may sound pusillanimous to somebody who does not understand the business. But it caused me to raise my estimation of Fred by a couple of notches. And I think that anybody who has edited anything under those circumstances would agree.

A couple of years later Fred just plain offered me the GALAXY column. I assumed that he wanted me to continue to handle it the way I had handled the Heinlein review. And although he wasn't always comfortable with what I did he never, ever censored it, except once and even then he didn't censor it, he sent back a column for a rewrite, not because he objected to what I'd said but because he could not understand what I'd said. That was my review of DANGEROUS VISIONS which I rewrote, saying exactly the same things, but in a less maniacal manner.

So I think that my review of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND, even though it's never been published, was what got me the GALAXY column.

Now, the reason the review was the way it was was on account of Damon Knight. Damon Knight had not been afraid to take on A.E. van Vogt. Damon Knight had not been afraid to poke fun at certain aspects of Isaac Asimov. Right or wrong, he had set an example. And I followed it. The example he had set was you don't do a hatchet job for the sake of doing a hatchet job but if you see something wrong you point it out. And it's to Damon's credit, as well as Fred's, in that sense.

This is a story that neither Fred nor I have been ashamed to tell people in small groups. So I figured I'd tell it to you now because I think it's time it got published out where the world can see it.

# SMALL PRESS NOTES

Publishers and others are increasingly sending me comic to read and review. I usually do because they're easy to read and review. But I don't want SFR to be tilted too much in that direction. Still...a lot of the material in comic is sf and fantasy, so some attention should be paid.

Bah, I've used up too much space saying nothing. Onward.

## FEELGOOD FUNNIES #2

is a badly drawn but fairly humorous satire of wimp-hood, psychiatry, and the various degrees of reality society deals in.

Roelbert Sturgeon is on the cover as author/artist, but Frank Stack holds the copyright.

Lotsa nudity here, but "Jane" is so ugly of face and "inexpertly" drawn that eroticism is nowhere in sight.

This is from Rip Off Press. \$2.

**THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE**  
Volume 7: All About Athens A Great Civilization in a Small Town Without Plumbing.

Everything you suspected was true but were afraid to do all that research. Humorous history---or History told humorously to take the curse off it. It's amazing how Larry Gonick (who didn't get his name on the cover, for Christ's sake!) is able to distill incident and battle and lifetimes to give the essence of the lives and times of the civilization of Athens, its peoples, it's major personages and personalities. Ah, the intrigues, the wars, the

rip-offs, the injustices, the absurdity of mankind...

How marvelous if Gonick would turn his attention to modern America. Well, at this rate he'll reach our era in forty years.

Don't miss this series! These volumes are precious and great! Get them, enjoy them, give them, later, to your kids.

This is only a measle \$2. From Rip Off Press, POB 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114.

You can get back issues. Do so.

## DALGODA #1

This is the Premiere Issue and is a very well-done production, with good paper, fine drawing, all-color.

A comic adventure, sf, about an alien menace to Earth and a wary species of dog-head humanoids who also face these ferocious, aggressive things from outer-outer space.

Surprisingly good characterizations and realism (that doesn't mean sex, by the way).

This costs \$2.25 from Fantagraphics Books, plus \$1.00 for postage and handling. Total \$3.25, which is a bit much.

Jan Strnad is the writer, and Dennis Fujitake is the artist. Both are damned good.

## EMPIRE FOR THE SF WRITER #33, \$2.

Edited by Millea Kenin  
Published by Unique Graphics,  
1025 55th St., Oakland, CA 94608.

Offset, but badly printed-fuzzy and faint in places (using paper plates, umm?) but of value to beginning and indeed some professional writers of sf and fantasy.

32 pages of articles, letters, reviews, and an interview with Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

In "Plotting Your Fiction: Pro and Con" by Kevin J. Anderson and Kristine K. Thompson we are treated to the sweat ethic vs. the inspiration approach.

Writers differ. Some do most of their organizing in the subconscious and others on paper ahead of time.

Me, I write sometimes forty-page outlines for a major novel. Too much is lost otherwise, and there's so much to keep track of, I can't imagine blundering along for 60,000 words and discovering major blunders which stop the novel in its tracks.

But wotthehell, I'm a disciple of Jack Woodford.

## THE MYSTERY & ADVENTURE SERIES REVIEW

#15  
POB 3488, Tucson, AZ 85722. \$1.50

Fred Woodworth is editor and publisher of this booklet of 36 pages which has NO CONTENTS PAGE OR PAGE NUMBERS!

Pulp era nostalgia fuels this periodical, and if that's your thing, this is your meat.

## FOUNDATION #31

'The Review of Science Fiction'  
Edited by David Pringle, Ian Watson, and John Clute.

SF Foundation,  
North East London Polytechnic,  
Longbridge Road, Dagenham, RM8 2AS,  
United Kingdom.

\$14.00 per year, three issues per year.

Classy, 107 pages, Big Names... Reviews, of course, and a letter, and 'Algis Budrys defines science fiction (almost)'... 'Gene Wolfe talks of posthistory and the space programme'... 'David Ketterer on Wagnerian Spenglerian Space Opera'

This is heavy stuff, and not



# RICHARD E. GEIS

one cartoon to take the curse off all those solid-print pages! There is of course a place for this kind of academic/sf professional fannag. They do print 1200 copies. And they are deadly serious.

**AGAINST THE WALL** Vol. 12, No. 10. A Magazine of Self Liberation and Voluntary Alternatives  
No editor listed, price \$2.  
POB 444,  
Westfield, NJ 07091

Ah, this is my kind of magazine. Irreverent, open-minded, honest, with lotsa sex ads in the back.

The interview with tax resister Carl Watner (now serving time) is fine.

There is even an article titled "Bleeding Heart Libertarianism," and one called "Decentralism Through World Government." First you have to have a libertarian world government, see, then you...

I liked the news commentary in the "Libertarian Notebook" column best.

**BURNING WITH A VISION**  
Poetry of Science and the Fantastic  
Edited by Robert Frazier  
\$14.75 hardcover, \$8.75 trade paperback.  
Oxleywood Press  
Box 8243  
Philadelphia, PA 19101

This anthology of poetry is heavy with well-known writers who sometimes write poetry: Brian Aldiss, Michael Bishop, Edward Bryant, David R. Bunch, Jack Dann, Thomas Disch, Suzette Haden Elgin, Philip Jose Farmer, Joe W. Haldeman, Ursula K. Le Guin, Mary Springer, Gene Wolfe, Roger Zelazny...and many more.

This is a notice of publication. I don't like much poetry and to actually review this would be a disservice, since I rarely find the sensual impact and delightful sound rhythms that I think should be in poetry, else why put prose in that form? However, D.M. Thomas impressed me with his "Head Rape."

**LIBERTARIAN MICROFICHE PUBLISHING**  
Literature List 1983  
John Zube,  
7 Oxley Street,  
Berrima, NSW, 2577, AUSTRALIA.

It's hard to understand why microfiche doesn't catch on. Probably the business of having to have a viewer....

Here are hundreds of books, mags, pamphlets on fiche, of a libertarian stripe.

Maybe if a fiche publisher gave away a free viewer with each order...and if free viewers were included with each purchase at a

bookstore or newsstand.... That's about the only way to create an audience for fiche viewing/reading.

Maybe if somebody put porno photos and drawings and stories on fiche...

**STIGMATA #21** \$2.00  
THE PROJECT STIGMA REPORT ON THE CONTINUING INVESTIGATION INTO THE OCCURRENCE OF ANIMAL MUTILATIONS  
Project Stigma  
POB 1094,  
Paris, TX 75460

A run-down on what is going on in the puzzling, baffling, and frightening area of (mostly) cattle mutilation.

Mutilation isn't the right word, it seems: surgical/laser excision is a better description, with the added factor of altered blood chemistry or altered cellular structure.

You really have to read this report to understand that these "mutilations" from many states are not depredations by other animals, and likely not obscene rites by some secret, wide-ranging devil-worshipping cult.

What we seem to have going on is either inexplicable alien experimentation/feeding, or ultra-secret U.S. government experimentation which requires certain organs and parts of (usually) cattle.

The possible explanations for this phenomenon [which simply cannot be denied or dismissed] are few and incredible.

Make up your own mind.

There is a pocketbook out now, on the subject: **MUTE EVIDENCE** by Daniel Kagan and Ian Summers. Bantam, \$4.95. After reading **STIGMATA** you may not agree with the conclusions of this book which is that the "mute myth" is a surfacing of mass hysteria and anxiety, and that the few actual animal mutilations are the work of a small cult.



**THE VISIONARY: The Life Story of**  
Flicker of the Serpentine  
By Ursula K. LeGuin

**WONDERS HIDDEN: Audubon's Early Years**  
By Scott R. Sanders

Both by Capra Press,  
POB 2068,  
Santa Barbara, CA 93120

These are back-to-back stories (as in the old Ace Doubles): a format designed as a showcase for shorter literary works.

The total book is 128 pages: deluxe softcover, \$7.50; the signed limited edition is \$25.

The world shown in LeGuin's "The Visionary" is far in the future, in northern California, and is a controlled tribal/technological society ---a utopia, actually, wherein technology is limited, where psi powers exist commonly but not extraordinarily, and where harmony and balance still cannot help much when a person such as Flicker---a 15-year-old girl ---cannot find her place, her niche, in her world.

As we follow her episodic life we learn about the customs, lives of these people who are not governed by a male-dominated society, who do not have rigid male-female roles. Or perhaps this society has a lingering feminist cast, since one of the old women repeats an old gibe: "A man fucks with his brain and thinks with his penis." And 'intellectual men are used to having their capacities doubted and their achievements snubbed.' Flicker defends a man by saying, "Even if he is a man he thinks like a woman!" A reversal of male chauvinism today, and a zinger LeGuin could not resist.

"Wonders Hidden" is the troubled and fascinating story of the life of John James Audubon from his early childhood to age 18, fictionalized from existing facts.

Audubon was illegitimate, born in Haiti, lived through the reign of terror in revolutionary France, went into exile in America at age 18 to avoid being drafted into Napoleon's army.

Interludes from the very direct and bitterly honest diaries of Audubon are presented. Are these fictional, too? They seem so real.

Excellent, gripping reading.

**THE STEEL EYE** By Chet Gottfried  
Published by Gordon Linzer  
138 West 70th St., #4B,  
New York, NY 10023

A novel. Trade paperback format.

For a few pages this robot private eye story is cute and clever, but it soon becomes irritating as the style is a dedicated

translation: the robot detective thinks like a human, and acts like a human and all this mechanical and electronic jazz is simply Bat Durs-ton in sheet steel drag.

The irritation springs, for me, in the constant thinking, "Aha, this expression, this thought, this dialog, this description is an equivalent of a regular private-eye style." Each bit of translation required/reminded me to think of the "real" one. Frankly, I'd rather read a private-eye novel about humans, not a private-eye novel about machines acting and thinking like humans (and with humans dressed as robots--an interesting touch in this mechanical/electronic society of the future, but not enough to overcome my irritation).

The price is \$5.95, and Chet has talent, make no mistake. It's just that this much of his private-eye robot is too much!

#### IT'S DOWN THE SLIPPERY CELLAR STAIRS

By R.A. Lafferty [Non-fiction]  
Chris Drumm, Books  
POB 455, Polk City, IA 50226.

Some interesting book reviews, a convention report, opinions on the skill and art of writing.

This booklet is priced at \$5. per copy, signed by the author. The print is too small.

LOVE AMONG THE XOIDS By John Sladek  
Chris Drumm, Books (as above).

A short story in chapbook format, I think [sewn binding, limited edition of 126 copies, \$3. each]. Technically, what is is the chapbook format?

Well, anyway, the story is an intriguing one about those "invisible" and "unseen" people who are the fringes of the fringe of the non-people in society--they sneak into houses for a bite to eat, a drink (never taking so much it will be noticed!), into busses, into used clothing stores...even into a hospital bed unused for a day or two when one of their number is sick. A closed, sad, depressed little clique of people who cannot have children--the logistics!--but who steal unwanted, abused babies now and then to keep their ranks filled.

This one might very well be a collector's item.

SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE - Oct. '84  
Edited and published by Andrew Porter  
Algol Press  
POB 4175,  
New York, NY 10163-4175

This 40-page offset magazine, the only real competition to LOCUS, continues to do a fine job of reporting, with photos, the events and people of sf and fantasy.

The Hugo voting results are in this issue, with a complete showing of the cycle of voting in the Australian ballot system used.

And obits: Walter Tevis, J.B. Priestley, and Charles Ford Hansen died.

New releases (with pictures of the covers--handy!), columns, letters, fan coverage, reviews...the whole spectrum.

Monthly, \$21. per year in USA, \$27 in Europe, \$30 in Australia, all sent first class & airmail.

#### WINNOWN STAR

By Richard Hilliard  
The OZ Press, \$7.95  
POB 33088, Seattle, WA 98133

This novel touches a lot of interesting bases, but is not interested in developing them. The reader is left unsatisfied.

The hero, an astronaut opposed to a "star wars" series of nuclear-armed satellites, meets and falls in love with a strange young woman in Hawaii who has had an unexplained UFO-kidnap experience.

The world discovers a strange interstellar comet/planet named Ra in a near-collision course with Earth which will cause catastrophic floods, earthquakes, tidal waves, etc.

The powers-that-be decide to send a lifeboat containing 20-odd carefully chosen people into space which will return after Ra has passed. (Just in case all of humanity is killed on Earth.) The hero astronaut is chosen to pilot the craft.

His woman friend is put on board the space lifeboat and gives birth to a strange, super baby, a child who is phenomenally intelligent, empathic, swift-growing. Obviously another Christ figure. (With the hint/implication that aliens impregnated her and also may have guided Ra on its destructive course.

But after the specially adapted space shuttle lands in Hawaii after Ra has passed, and is welcomed by a Libertarian/Survivalist millionaire, the U.S. government finds out about the wonder child and comes for it. (The destruction was not all that great, it turns out.)

The child is accidentally killed during a showdown with the government and...uh...in an epilogue of sorts we discover that the evil military takeover of the US govt. was ended, the astronaut was elected president, and he is Doing the Right Things...like trusting the Russians.

Was all this planned by aliens? What really was Ra? And how come, despite all the technical chit-chat I didn't believe a word of this novel?

Richard Hilliard, an idealist, wanted to solve the world's problems the old fashioned way--by letting The Gods do it. Probably because he doesn't see any way mankind can do it.

But he threw away the Aliens and the Child and Ra, and forced the reader to eat a diet of often pointless dialogue and no-suspense technical coping in space, and on Earth.

Boring.

#### PHILIP K. DICK: IN HIS OWN WORDS

By Gregg Rickman  
Fragments West/The Valentine Press  
3908 ERst 4th Street  
Long Beach, CA 90814

Introduction by Roger Zelazny.

An excellent book in which parts of extensive interviewing by Gregg Rickman of Phil Dick, with a fine analysis on-going of Dick and his works, is presented by segments, categories, titles, persons.

Thank God Rickman was able to spend so much time with Dick in the year (and days) before Phil died.

This book is mandatory reading for any dedicated Phil Dick fan.



Limited edition of 1100 copies.  
Another printing is due.

This costs \$9.95. Trade paperback format. Quality product.

Two other volumes will follow: THE LAST TESTAMENT and PHILIP K. DICK: A LIFE. Both of these, as well, will feature extracts from the extensive taped interviews of Phil.

LOVE AND ROCKETS #2 \$2.95  
Fantagraphics Books  
196 West Haviland Lane, Stamford CT  
06903

Black and white 68-page comic book, mostly concerning the diary (illustrated) of a certain Maggie who got involved in a war and...

Well, it isn't all that great a story, or that well illustrated. It does have a strong feminist flavor, for those whose tastes run to the discovery than men are human and...

I object to a panel showing a hairbreadth escape, a young woman being rescued in the nick of time, hanging from a helicopter in a man's arms with dialogue like:

"Wow! That's the stuff comics are made of!"

"Eek! Somebody turn the page! You can see my panties!"

Wow! Somebody at Fantagraphics cut out that crap! You can see the destruction of credibility and the sordid rise of Bad Satire, which self-destructs more comic than bad drawing.

IN A FARAWAY GALAXY  
A LITERARY APPROACH TO A FILM SAGA  
By Doris Robin, Lee Vibber, and  
Gracia Fay Ellwood.  
Extequer Press, \$6.95  
POB 60193, Pasadena, CA 91107

All about the Star Wars films, its characters, its structure, by three hardcore fans who are also into teaching and writing.

SPACE & TIME #67 \$4.  
Edited and published by Gordon Linzer  
138 West 70th Street, #4-B,  
New York, NY 10023.

A big, big 120-page issue of fiction and poetry. A letter section. An editorial. I make it bad habit to read at least the first few paragraphs of amateur and semi-professional published in the fan press; I read until I begin to wince or cringe.

I winced and cringed through this magazine and don't think Gordon Linzer knows what professional-quality writing is---or doesn't get any submitted to him and chooses the



YES, IT'S TRUE...  
THERE IS NO  
RICHARD GETS



AND NO  
NECESSITY  
TO INVENT  
HIM I



least bad to publish. Either way, I don't think this magazine is worth \$4.

The art work is pretty good, though; as good or better than what the old pulp mags used.

FANTASY REVIEW #71 \$2.75  
Edited By Robert A. Collins  
College of Humanities  
Florida Atlantic Univ.  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

This magazine has journeyed in recent months/years from FANTASY NEWSLETTER to the current title, and from a rival of LOCUS and SF CHRONICLE to a rival of SFR, I would guess.

It features fine covers, good layout, interviews, articles, columns by and about sf and fantasy writing, books. [Ah, ah! Let me note there is a page of Events & Awards news, and two pages on a kind of Archives listing of Sept. paperbacks, and two pages on hardcover releases...and four columns on Specialty and Fan Press.

And 17 of the magazine's 44 pages are filled with reviews.

A labor of love.

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# THE GLASS BUSHEL

A COLUMN BY BOB SHAW

## HARD ROW TO HOE

I have never believed all that stuff about there being a destiny which shapes our ends---especially in view of some of the ends that one sees at SF conventions---but recently I had cause to wonder...

The day started off with one really urgent job among the clutter of little tasks which always conspire to prevent a free-lance story writer from actually writing stories. It involved mailing a very important document to my agent, whose office is in Bedford Row, London. I was also to attend the SF Supper Club in London that evening, which meant taking an early afternoon train south, so production time was going to be curtailed as it was.

Very much aware of time's winged chariot rumbling along at the old heels, I hastily addressed an envelope, shoved in the aforementioned document, nipped across to the post office in my slippers and consigned the package to Her Majesty's mails. (I like having a post office only a hundred yards from the front door, especially as this one, unusually, is also a liquor store. I can buy booze with cheques made out to 'Leigh Villas Post Office', thus misleading both my bank manager and the Indian Revenue.)

With the one vital task taken care of, I worked somewhat haphazardly for the rest of the morning, doing things like tearing up the weekly plea from American Express to become a member. There must be something really suspect about that outfit's finances if they want me to join. Then I had a couple pints of lunch and caught the London train. The people whose job it is to dig up tracks must have been off on the sick or something, but we were whisked down to the metropolis in just over two hours.

That put me and the rest of the passengers in the compartment in a good mood, which however was spoiled when a voice from the PA system told us we were approaching Euston Station, where the train would "terminate". After we had realised they only meant they were going to stop and let us get off everybody cheered up again, and I was quite pleased to find myself emerging from Euston with more than an hour to spare.

It was a very pleasant evening and I decided to go on foot to the pub in High Holborn where the supper club meets. An impulse prompted me to avoid my usual course down Tottenham Court Road, so I struck off to the east of the British Museum and after a while reached Southampton Row. Now, to the best of my knowledge I had never been in Southampton Row and had never had any

dealings connected with it, but this was one of those London evenings which G.K. Chesterton so much loved as a setting for short stories.

You know the ones in which a clear sky slowly deepens into peacock blue-green, dusk begins to gather in the tree-lined avenues, the big quiet houses become mysterious and Father Brown senses he is on the verge of another adventure. It was a bit too much to hope that anything romantic or bizarre would happen to me en route for a couple of bitters with some SF cronies, but going down an unfamiliar street would be a microscopic little adventure of sorts. At least I would be behaving like a real writer, responding to the glamour of the evening.

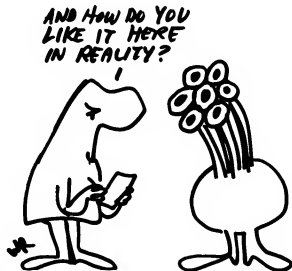
On turning the corner into Southampton Row I glanced up at the street sign---and was transfixed.

It was just like one of those scenes in a psychological melodrama, where the hero remembers some object which is significant to his past and there is much screaming music and the camera repeatedly zooms in on and pulls back from what he is seeing. I felt the proverbial icy hand clutching my heart.

The letters of the street sign seemed to dissolve, the surroundings seemed to fade away, and for an instant I was back at my desk and again was seeing the envelope I had addressed to my agent that morning.

I was actually able to read the address as though looking at the real envelope---and it said Southampton Row instead of Bedford Row.

I knew with a dreadful certainty that I had made an inexplicable mistake and had sent the urgent and vital document to the wrong address!





Armed with that knowledge I was able to take remedial action first thing on the following morning and not much harm was done, but I still haven't identified the true beginning of the odd little circular train of events. As I mentioned above, I had no previous connection with Southampton Row and knew nothing about the place---so how did it get into the act?

There was no reason for me to make that weird mistake when addressing the envelope; and it was pure blind chance which took me into that street, hundreds of miles away, on the same evening, for the first time in my life.

Or was it?

#### MEMORIES ARE MADE OF WHAT?

Perhaps, although it doesn't explain much, I had been in Southampton Row sometime long ago. Memory, like time, is more complicated than most people admit or appreciate. I can make that statement with some confidence due to an odd experience I had at the dentists some years back...

It was a cold, wet March morning in Belfast and I was working as an aircraft designer. I left the office and, feeling subdued because of toothache, drove through a series of those sad, bleak streets which have since become familiar to TV viewers throughout the world. My dentist shared a practice in Castlereagh Street--a redbrick canyon lined by two terraces of once-imposing Victorian houses. As I had done many times before, I parked off the main street, walked round the corner to the dentist's front door, went inside the gloomy old house and proceeded up the stairs to the first landing.

I turned on the landing to face a scene which was very familiar to me--a short flight of stairs leading up to the second landing, a door on the left leading into my dentist's surgery, a door on the right leading into his partner's surgery. (It is important to give these precise architectural details, partly because--as I discovered while writing my SF/horror novel, *LAGER OF THE MIND*--that kind of house becomes a living character in any story you set in it.)

As I have said, I have gone up those stairs to keep dental appointments many times previously and had thought nothing of it, but this time something was different. I paused on the first landing, feeling a strange coldness which had nothing to do with the cheerless grey illumination leaking down from the skylight. Inexplicably, my gaze was

drawn to the door on the right, i.e. to the wrong surgery, and I got that celebrated crawling sensation on the nape of my neck.

For a moment it seemed that I could see through the closed door. I got a vision, not of a dentist's chair and equipment, but of a young woman lying in an old-fashioned bed. She was wearing a bed jacket of pale green silk, and---somehow---I knew she was my mother, my mother as she had been several decades earlier.

The experience lasted for perhaps only two seconds, then everything was back to normal, but the impression it made on me was profound. When I left the building thirty minutes later I stood uncertainly in the rain, gingerly prodding novocaine-numbed lips, then decided to filch some extra time from work to visit my mother. On reaching the house I refused her offer of tea and, now feeling quite idiotic, asked her where I had been born.

"Kells Nursing Home," she said.

"Exactly where is that?"

"It was in Castlereagh Street," she said, giving me a curious glance---the subject had never come up before. "But I think a dentist has the place now."

Further enquiries revealed that she had indeed been confined in the room on the right of the first landing, and her growing puzzlement about the strange line of questioning turned to surprise when I mentioned the bed jacket of pale green silk. She had briefly owned such a jacket around the time I was born, but she couldn't understand how I knew about it.

It seems a pity to cap an intriguing story with a prosaic explanation, but my innate honesty won't allow me to leave the matter there. I also found out that my brother Gerry, who is only a year younger, had also been born in the same room. And it seems quite likely that a one-year-old Bosh had been carried in there by his father during a visit, thus implanting a memory---but why did it choose that particular occasion to emerge from my subconscious?

And why was it accompanied by all the M.R. James sensations?

#### THAT SINKING FEELING

Not so long ago I was strolling with Harry Harrison through the renowned Vale of Avoca in the south of Ireland, where he now lives. We were on our way to a pub which was reputed to serve an excellent draught Guinness. Suddenly he stopped, grabbed my arm and pointed out a notice which was barely visible as a tiny

white speck at the crest of a steep and rocky hillside.

"Bob," he said, his eyes gleaming with the famous Harrison fervour, "I'll give you a hundred thousand dollars if you can guess what that sign says."

"You're kidding," I said.

He shook his head. "I'm deadly serious---a hundred grand if you guess what's on the sign."

I weighed his proposition in my mind. All it needed was one of my brilliant leaps of superhuman intuition and I would be in the money. I wouldn't have made Harry pay up the full amount, of course---even though he has been doing rather well lately---but a modest ten thousand would have been fair and would have taught him not to indulge in extravagant statements. I studied the white speck atop its dusty and rock-strewn elevation. Obviously the sign had to say something no ordinary mind could predict, something totally unexpected.

Summoning up all the powers of my Null-A brain, I said, "Labrador pups for sale."

"Wrong!" Harry said triumphantly.

I tried not to be too disappointed---he probably wouldn't have coughed up even the measly ten thousand. "What is it?"

"You wouldn't believe it until you see it with your own eyes. Come on!" He set off up the hill at a surprisingly rapid pace, and I followed. It took us a full fifteen minutes of slogging over dusty tracks and piles of loose shale to reach the sign.

It said: DANGER---KEEP OUT---QUICKSAND.

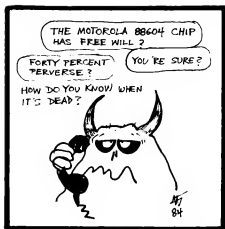
It was Ireland we were in, after all, and at least the Guinness went down well afterwards.



WE WILL BE inventing some vocabulary and concepts as we go along. Concept One: We are talking about a device in aid of low-volume creativity.

Most of what's said in the trade about "word-processing" is aimed at clerical needs. The needs of the creative writer are quite different. The literature and folklore are concerned largely with high-volume uncreative production of imprinted paper, and are mostly relevant to report-typists, chart-makers, and bookkeepers, whereas what the fiction writer wants is the equivalent of a very large legal pad, an ever-sharp pencil with an unfailing eraser, and a secretary who comes in at the end of the day, types up everything clean and files it.

There are a couple of ways to go. There's the single-unit, everything-in-one-cabinet approach, and there's the stack of components. I think your chances of finding a single-unit system truly designed for just you are low, even if you



having the best possible core to your system.

The actual word-processing program is what really counts; everything else is peripheral.

There are lots of programs. All of them by definition are supposed to move or delete blocks of text on

into taking a lot of guff from people who sneer at Atari for various reasons, some of them good, but let's talk components and terminology for a while, and maybe it will all make sense.

"COMPUTERS" (It makes more functional sense to speak of keyboard units) have a work-capacity which is expressed in thousands--"K". At the present time, 64K is the magic number; anything rated below that is despicable, so some keyboard unit manufacturers find tricky ways to make units of intrinsically lesser K appear to have 64.

The K capacity is divided into two parts called ROM and RAM. ROM--which ought to be called the hard-wired part--is what wakes up when you switch on. It's an idiot that does the keyboard's internal housekeeping; tells itself what room originated the sound of the bell it hears below stairs, and responds in a purely Pavlovian way by going into preset routines whenever it realizes

## ADVICE TO A NEW WRITER ON THE CHOICE OF A FIRST WORD-PROCESSOR

BEING WISDOM FREELY GIVEN AND PERHAPS WORTH IT

By ALGIS BUDRYS

look among what are called "dedicated" word-processors or such all-in-one computers as the Kaypro. They offer compactness and portability, and similar mechanical advantages, but I think you're going to do better by assembling a component system. And, perhaps paradoxically, I think you're going to save a lot of money going that route.

But you want to approach this with realistic expectations: You're never going to find the perfect rig, any more than you could ever find the perfect typewriter or the perfect secretary. You're going to have to break yourself into using the system, and with each component you put into the system, you're going to foreclose other possibilities. For instance, your choice of a word-processing program may restrict the consequent choices of hardware. And in fact what I'm going to recommend will marry you to just one brand of keyboard. But that's not necessarily bad. And in any case, you should be willing to compromise a lot for the sake of

command, to search out "strings" of characters on command and replace them with new strings either in just one place or throughout the file, and make whatever other moves are analogous to drawing little arrows through the manuscript and shuffling the 3x5 cards. Most of the highly touted among them, however, like the famous Wordstar, betray the fact that the goal of word-processing program design is to circumvent any initiative on the part of semi-educated clerical personnel. The more expensive and highly touted they are, the more this is apt to be their paramount feature. I use AtariWriter instead; it, too, was never designed especially for creative writing, but fortuitously it's rather amenable to the mode; it doesn't get in my way and it helps me when it can. Although it has a little less capability than the user's manual seems to promise, it has comfortably more than I need in many ways, and no idiosyncrasies I can't get around easily.

By and large I can't imagine a better idea for a program of use to creative writers. It does put you into using the Atari keyboard, which is not perfect. It also puts you

a key has been touched. Since many of the keys, when touched in combination with other keys, issue routing commands that require a lot of electrons to scurry in many directions, there's a lot more to this than just literally transcribing your typing. Most ROMs use about a fourth of the keyboard's rated K just to house themselves.

What you type into the keyboard is stored in RAM, which is a balloon. RAM gradually fills up with your creation, which puffs away forever into the thin air when you switch off. If you want to save the RAM-content, before you switch off you command ROM to transmit a description of it to a magnetic storage medium. That's housed in another machine; either a cassette deck or disk player-recorder. Cassette storage units are toys. Disk-storage is the only one to consider in the present state of the art; it uses something like a miniature video disk that gets inserted square sleeve and all. There are all sorts of disks, but the most common is the ordinary "floppy disk," and the unit that handles it is called a "disk drive," presumably because if they called it a gramophone that might send a

little too homely.

Disk drives enable you to store from RAM, or to play content from a recorded disk into RAM. This means you can do part of a job today, store it, retrieve it tomorrow, and keep working on it. It also means this is a convenient way and by far the most common way to introduce programs into the keyboard unit. You buy a prerecorded disk with the program on it. When you load the program from the disk into the keyboard unit, it is now in two places at once. It's still on the disk, and it's in the keyboard unit as well.

A program is a device for managing ROM for a specialized purpose; it amplifies ROM's routines in some ways, suppresses others, and shoots it in desired directions. It interfaces with ROM, so to speak. But it lives in RAM, which means a disk-borne program of this sort takes away K-capacity for your input. A word-processing program can easily absorb 12K worth of RAM.

Other things further reduce capacity. ROM will interact only with things that positively establish their eligibility, and it will only follow certain protocols in dealing with them. Every blank fresh disk has to be "formatted," for instance, and then it has to pass a message contained in a "DOS file," or it won't "boot up." Functional translation: As a practical matter, each of your disks will lose some of its text capacity by using some of it to store its credentials, and in any case, since those are a "program" in themselves, they will always take away some of the remaining rated K in RAM.

For this reason, there is market pressure toward high-K keyboards —128K will soon be the new magic number—and toward disks (or other storage systems) with higher and higher capacity. As in music-system and video marketing, this is also how you keep the ticket big. You need none of this. You can do excellently with what would be obsolete hardware and rudimentary systems in almost any other application; the Discontinued and Closeout Sale is where you shop with a grin and a light heart.

LET'S talk "sectors." The sector is the basic unit I work with; I don't even think about bytes and bits.

A disk is electronically divided into sectors. I have about 700 sectors' worth of storage space per disk, since I use single-side, single-density (cheap) disks. In my

rig, a totally filled RAM contains enough information to fill about 170 sectors, and as a practical matter what this means is that I can get a novel onto five disks of four 170-sector "files" each. I have no idea of what the actual usable RAM K of my rig is, and I don't have to know. It takes about a dozen 12-pitch (elite) double-spaced manuscript pages to fill it, and those translate into 170 sectors of disk.

Now let's review the bidding here. Notice that the sophistication and capacity of the storage equipment do not determine the practicality of the system; the RAM K does that. It seems to me that 12 pages of final draft is a nice day's work, and that five disks makes an acceptably small bundle. Since you will be saving from RAM to disk only about once per working day, and then in most cases only at its end, you can use a system that is old and slow and coarse—that is to say, something that takes as much as two or three minutes and uses discount disks that cost \$19.87 per 10 and come in their own storage box. Nor do you need more than 10 disks per large project, even if you make a backup set, nor do you need more than one drive.

Having just one drive is living in the sticks; anyone who knows anything can tell you that. But the fact is that in a creative writer's working day, there's very little need to gather material from a number of disks or pass it around among many disks. A great deal of such combining can be done within the keyboard unit, especially with the help of AtariWriter and for all I know any number of other programs. In any case, the unit holds its information independently, while you pop disks in and out of your single drive if need be. I can't imagine the writer who would need more than a single, ordinary, now-obsolete and therefore cheap Atari 810, which is a somewhat noisy but actually very gentle and reliable unit that has never given me a moment's trouble nor torn up a disk. Look in the back-page mail-order ads in home computer magazines for an idea of price.

Similarly, my keyboard is an Atari 1200XL, a piece of hardware much despised by everyone quick to seem smart in the market, including Atari, and discontinued and thus cheap; utterly reliable, reasonably compact, probably capable of compatibility with most Atari doodads to come and, if not, so cheap to replace as to be disposable.

It has two great advantages apart from price. One is that it takes AtariWriter (appr. \$90). AtariWriter comes not on disk but in its own hard-wired plug-in cartridge. Thus, among other things, it steals no RAM. (Just as well, I am told, because the 64K-rated 1200XL is actually a much lesser device until such a cartridge is plugged in. But all I really care about is the 170 sectors.)

AtariWriter comes with a very good comprehensive manual, and is supposed to also come with a short-list "ready-reference" card for use once you've read through the bigger book a couple of times. My factory-sealed carton contained no such handy thing. Inadequate or totally missing documentation is the rule in the "home computer" world, and it's also typical that Atari's 800 customer-service phone number has never done me a bit of good when I could get it to answer at all. But the comprehensive manual is a very good piece of work, if you remember to read every word, and is all you need. You can pick it up for the first time in your life in the morning, and be doing work that afternoon. Furthermore, you will still like it a year later.

The other major advantage of an Atari-housed system is that the Atari graphics circuitry is still among the very best there is, far better than anything competitive at the price. Translation: You can use an old TV set for your working screen.

In the store, almost anything can be set up to look useable. But at home you're sitting there hour after hour, staring at it. Fuzzy or poorly-designed graphics, or a stupidly formatted display, would, I imagine, soon gnaw you into severe distress. I wouldn't know—I've got a very nice screen display; not unimprovable, but far superior to anything else I've seen. True, I'm using a Sony; equally true, it's the first Sony color TV model ever marketed in the U.S.; a dinosaur that had been gathering dust in an upstairs room, and the rig has run manageably with an even older black-and-white portable full of very tired tubes.

This is worth going into in some detail.



What I can see by looking at the screen is every character I've typed in, plus symbols indicating commands. Those commands will be executed when the text prints out; meanwhile, I can't see their actual effect. All the text on this screen--call it the editing screen--is shown flush left, together with its commands and a flashing underline--my "cursor"--that tells me where the next character will appear. For instance, when I come to the end of a paragraph, I hit a Return key. A dark arrow against a bright background appears there, and the next character I type will appear flush left--on the extreme left margin--of the next line. I want to have indented paragraphs, so that first character isn't to be printed; I hit a Control key and a capital P simultaneously, and I get a glowing paragraph symbol, which tells me the ROM will, in due course, initiate a chain of messages that will tell my printer to indent at that line. How far it will indent is something I told it earlier.

All AtariWriter files begin with a string of commands, called the page formatting commands. They determine where the left and right margins, and the top and bottom of the printing area of the page, will be. They determine whether there'll be extra space between paragraphs, whether the right margin will be "justified" --that is, flush right--and also the number of spaces in each paragraph indent. They'll dictate line spacing and the total number of lines in the printing area. And in many systems, they'll also determine the pitch of the type --elite, pica, or extended faces. When the file first loads, these are set at arbitrary "default values," and one look at those tells you without a doubt that whoever designed the formatting was thinking of corporate reports, not of a manuscript. So I've had to begin my file by resetting every one of them.

(As a matter of fact I have a very short file, called MANUSCRI, with those values permanently on it, and I load that into RAM, and work on it until I'm done for the day. Then I change its name in RAM to the name of my story, and save it all as a new file with the correct values embedded. The old file, of course, is still on the disk as MANUSCRI, for the next time I need to open a fresh story file. If you can't quite follow all those moves as yet, don't worry--my immediate message is there are quick ways to skin even stubborn cats.)

I've also put in some auxiliary commands along the way. Almost surely, I've called for a heading



and a number on every page, for instance. The program will keep track of it, once it has the text for the header, the page location, and the starting page number, but I have to tell it all that at the beginning or, more usually for headers, at the beginning of Page Two. Then, in the story text, if I want to vary from the overall format, I have to tell ROM when to make that change, and when to stop making it.

This results in a screencful of blips and words that look very little like the eventual print-out. AtariWriter has an indispensable feature called "word wrap"--some so-called word-processing programs don't. It means you can just keep typing, and the screen will look as if you'd hit a carriage return as you approached its right side. If a word won't fit on the line, it goes flush left down to the next line. This is terrific for creativity; you just keep on banging out the keystrokes, and nothing interrupts the flow, nor is there ever any need to think about line-end hyphenation. You are literally working on the story, and you learn to read the screen for that. But every so often, you want a look at where you are in the manuscript, and for that the raw, unpolished screen is useless.

For one thing, essentially like almost all home-unit screens, the editing screen is only 36 characters wide and 21 lines deep, with the top line disappearing upward when you fill the bottom line, whereas your manuscript is going to be, say, 72x25.

Some (ritzier) computers head off this problem with (expensive) high-resolution monitors rather than TVs, and circuitry that puts 80 (small) characters on a (thin) screen line. This gives you a fair idea, although on an Atari and on most units, it still would run everything else flush left with

embedded command sigils.

Some keyboard units will accept what's called an "80-column card." This is an aftermarket circuit-board or plug-in adapter (I suspect "card" is a corruption of "cartridge") that converts the editing screen into something like 80x44. It does this by reducing the size of the characters by over 50%. It can cost closer to \$200, and it means you also have to dump your TV and buy a monitor for a couple of hundred yet additional, for sure. Why? Because there are just so many picture-making dots (called "pixels") per square unit of screen surface, and when you shrink the characters by half, you only get half as many pixels with which to form each character. The practical effect is to force you to lean into the screen, or get stronger glasses; the cumulative effect of all that, over long working days, is backaches and headaches.

I would guess that only the Atari circuits would allow you to go to 80-column and keep your TV set. I'll never know--the Atari 1200XL's cabinet is shaped wrong to accept the Atari 80-column card, which was designed for the squarer, thicker 800. I'm just as glad; remember you still can't really see a one-for-one representation of the printed page. So I see the 80-column thing as a means of selling extra hardware, not as something of any great use. It's certainly not necessary.

AtariWriter does contain a routine that serves to show me, for instance, exactly where the top of Page 2 falls. It's called Preview. By keying for it, I can look at all of the file, or any page of the eventual manuscript, one 36x21 section at a time.

What Preview does is lay out the copy as it will fall on the print-out, and as if the whole page were located in hyperspace somewhere just beyond your screen. This gives you a screen-sized rectangular "knot-hole" to peer "through." You can then "move" that "knot-hole" by using your cursor--locating controls to sweep "over" the "page." You can see whether the headings are right, where your copy is falling and where to shift it to if desired. You can't edit in Preview mode, but if you make a mental or jotted note of which words occur where, you can key back into Edit and--using your various copy-moving capabilities --for instance quickly relocate your footnote keystrokes down to the bottom of the page. And so on. It's really quite fast and flexible.

Preview is not perfect, but nothing is. I believe that no

competitor has anything as good. It does use some RAM while in operation. As you get toward the end of your 170 sectors, it no longer has room to show you more than the tops of pages. It can be a shock, the first time you want to see the bottom of a page. You can move on to study the top of the next page, and this sometimes suffices, but some of the time there's nothing for it—you're going to have to make a rough printout of any page you need to see.

Well, cartons of the cheapest 3000-page printer paper are not expensive. Furthermore, although I suppose it's possible to produce letter-perfect copy on the screen, I never have yet and suspect most people don't. So even with an 80-column screen, or some sort of perfect Preview, I suspect I would still routinely do a complete rough print-out, proofread it, put in my corrections, and print out the corrected pages, page by page. That may not be how they do it in training films from IBM Clerical Academy, but I think it's good enough for me and you.

This brings us to printing, which after all is what this is all really for.

O.K., by now you may think I've said you can only print out a dozen pages at a time. Not so. There is a thing called "chaining," which allows you to connect a string of files. The program will print them continuously, still keeping track of headings. Once per page, past the first file, the disk drive will burst into brief life, apparently testing the link, and startling hell out of the uninitiated. Also, each file will still follow its own page-formatting, and any last-minute editorial afterthoughts will require loading and reloading the affected files individually. (Meaning that extensive edits may throw off the page-counting by enough to create misnumbered headings, and you may have to embed a fresh header command at that point in the text.)

But these are just little household chores, sent by God to keep you humble; learn to take quiet glory in them. Meanwhile, hippety hop, off we go to the printer shop!

THE FIRST THING to find out about any printer is whether it will interface with your word-processor. The second thing is whether the interface is already installed and it, and all connecting cables, are already included in the price. The third thing, then, would be the price and availability of any

required add-on interfacings. But after that, you begin choosing among types of printer.

Printers of course are all designed for clerical use, and applicability to creative needs has to be [A] fortuitous and [B] sought out carefully. They come in two kinds; those which manipulate increments of characters and those which strike-on entire characters. The latter are usually called "daisy wheel" printers even though some use thimble-shaped typing elements and some use even stranger devices. The term comes from the fact that the most common strike-on element is shaped something like a trans-mogrified daisy flower with a letter at the end of each petal; a rotating portion of the printer spins the proper petal into place and a solenoid-driven hammer smacks the petal.

A strike-on printer per se is essentially a smart typewriter without a keyboard, unless it happens to be an electronic typewriter interfaced with a computer and so drafted part-time into service as a printer. Thus strike-on devices divide into keyboardless printers and, in a far smaller proportion, interfaced typewriters.

Hardly anyone in the computer store or in the handy home-guide book on computers mentions interfaced typewriters. This is because, once again, no one in the industry even thinks about the possible special needs of writers, which is particularly paradoxical when you consider that the books and the compute-at-home magazines and even some of the manuals are written by writers.

Any printer, after all, is useless without a computer, whereas a typewriter is in effect its own backup, and, even if the computer never goes down—mine never has, but they do, once in a while—the typewriter's keyboard allows you to dash off a note to the milkman

without hitting four preliminary switches. Or, how about this? Once a keyboard has gotten used to the freedom of word-wrap and various other amenities of computerized keyboarding, shouldn't the backup device simulate those amenities as closely as possible? Electronic typewriters come with automatic carriage return which is in effect word-wrap; with semiautomatic erasing, and other features that are word-processor-like, enabled by their own on-board computer. They upgrade in price and sophistication to the point where they approach being dedicated word-processors. Any of them make the mere electric typewriter a ludicrous antique.

If you look at the price of an interfaced electronic typewriter as the cost of a printer plus a backup typewriter, that price suddenly becomes very reasonable. What's more, the price is dropping. Sears, Roebuck, for instance, markets one made by Brother International that doesn't cost as much as some "cheap" printers. I know nothing else about it; I do know that several electronic typewriters I've tried are noisy (particularly IBM's) and seem klutzy in various ways,—but, then, I'm spoiled; I own a Facit 8000. This is the machine they have in mind when they say "typewriter." Mind you, the 8000 is the bottom of the Facit line, and I got it dirt cheap—without the interface, which came later—with three months to pay, no interest, plus a liberal trade-in on my boat-anchor of a shot-down IBM Model C, because "no one" had ever heard of Facit.

It's from a perfectly dandy Swedish marque, simple, light, mechanically elegant with so few moving parts in the printing system that you can count them (9). It has three pitches plus proportional spacing, each at the flick of a lever (while running, if desired); it has four tabs and a decimal tab, it will tab in either direction, it will erase, it will semi-automatically underline, in both cases using its on-board memory. It has twenty available daisy wheels full of many extra characters. There's a gemlike one for the proportional-spacing feature. And when this darling device sets about its operations, it doesn't clatter; it speaks of itself like Bojangles doing a softshoe...but I digress. (The higher-number models have little display panels that show you a few words before they're printed, to me a superfluous feature as long as the erasing ribbon holds out.)

My point is [A], you want to look at this sort of possibility instead of the solutions designed for clerical use, and [B], you want



to consider that this is another direction from which to enter the word-processing world if you can't afford to buy all the pieces at once. It's the direction I went; first the typewriter, whose facilities quickly earned me the price of the \$350 aftermarket interface, and then the rest of the hardware and software.

Mind you, this was not ultimately the cheap way, on two levels. The interface, for example, does not talk directly to the processor. Ataris are standoffs. It talks to an Atari 850 interface box (\$190, plus shipping and sales tax, Sears Catalog) which talks to the processor. But the same box will also talk to a number of other "peripherals" for which it has a number of input and output "ports," including one that hooks to a telephone via a "modem" box. (My son Steve, the genius, and I, the slow learner, have occasional uses for little boxes full of zippy-zappy that have nothing to do with word-processing.) So the price of the 850 amortizes in several other applications as well, but nevertheless this personal system is not a monument to shoestringing.

The other way in which this is not cheap is that it hurts to see how crudely the Facit is utilized as a printer. Steve is slowly working out the hexadecimals, and I may eventually be able to use the commands that AtariWriter intends only for incremental, not strike-on printers. But meanwhile I can't get at the extra characters, nor can I underline, when interfaced with the Atari.

Having a keyboard, and a precision machine, I can put that stuff in by hand later, which is more than a printer can let me do. Many printers, not just mine, can't underline, can't do several other things any typewriter can do. In some cases, if you can unearth the hexadecimals—find out, in ROM's language, how it goes about talking to the printer—you have a fighting chance at instructing it, via embedded text commands, how to get the printer to for instance strike, back up, and strike again, which is what you have to do to get a daisy-wheel underline. But to make that work, you need to find out some things about the sneaky-peaky parts of the printer, too, and no cooperative manufacturer is very cooperative when you pry into what they see as proprietary inventions. What you need in all cases of going beyond the manuals is both an inventiveness of your own and the services of a consultant on Steve's level of proficiency. The SF community has a

lot of that floating around in it, but you can't rationally rely on that when you go shopping.

O.K. Assume you go for a conventional sort of printer:

The rap on daisy wheels is that they're slow (though not as slow as



interfaced typewriters, which normally run only twice as fast as an expert could hand-type error-free copy). Compared to incremental printers, they are, yes. The more they cost, the faster they go —that's what you're paying the premium for. The faster they go, the quicker they destroy their \$25-dollar daisy wheels and wear out their \$150-dollar hammers.

(My soft, slow Facit is showing no sign of deterioration, thank you.)

So if you're going to go daisy wheel, I would think your optimum machine would live somewhere in the cheap end of the spectrum. What's the hurry? If you're using continuous paper, you can go take a shower or make dinner, or sit and watch the ballgame on your TV, as the printer catches you up at the end of your satisfactorily fruitful creative day.

A nice option on slow printers is typewriter-like pressure-roller paper feed instead of the fast printers' tractor-feed that requires holed paper. By inserting a Page Wait command in the text file, you can have the printer stop after each page typed on ordinary paper sheets. Then you slip in a new one, hit Return, and the printer types the next page. You don't have to switch away from the ballgame, and you're producing copy without that computerized appearance.

(Do not buy an "automatic single-sheet feeder." They're hideously expensive and never jam until you're out of the room. Also do not buy any kind of paper-holder; set your box of routine-printout continuous roll on the floor under the printer, run the end up into the platen, and push Go. As it emerges, the printout will just loop back and deposit itself lightly on your dry, clean floor, neither bruising nor crumpling itself unless you interfere. It's only a relatively

few pages, remember, not the weighty output of an insurance company's steno pool.)

Incremental printers are amazingly fast and flexible; they don't just "type," they draw pictures. They work by impressing or spraying out little dots that form characters, and they are getting increasingly sophisticated. Some of them, in combination with the right programs, can produce some very catchy graphic effects. These do not strike me as advantages relevant to a writer's needs qua writer, but I can see how if I had a sideline in club bulletins or fanzines I might think about it. It gets you into manuscripts that I personally wouldn't send out —although as an editor I wouldn't much care whether they were in strike-on or one of the more strike-on-like incrementals—but past a certain point that's just my personal conservatism. The point is, of course, that some cheaper printers produce copy that's really aggravating to read page after page, and that can't be good for your sale.

Tractor-feed machines, too, really get you into the mystique of fanfold paper that doesn't look fanfold, and the arcana of tearaway edges, and all those other (inevitably expensive) mental sarabands. Personally, since 1952 I have been a member of the William Fitzgerald Jenkins school of manuscripting: If it's clear and consistent, it can be on mimeo paper was his credo, and I share it. I also don't do long multiple printouts, even using cheap paper with non-tearaway holes; Xerox is cheaper, and obliterates the holes in any case.

Whatever, I think you can set yourself up very nicely for something around a grand, grand-and-a-half. I would look really hard at AtariWriter in any case. Atari also supposedly has some really hot new stuff; maybe it's better for our purposes, maybe it's just some additional consumer merchandising.

The idea is, after all, to get out the story. All the devices applied to producing a manuscript should make it easier to create and get out the story. They should cost no more to obtain, set up and maintain than they have to in order to be better than any other devices that will help, not hinder, the getting-out-of the story. All of the rest is just playing at being a vestpocket International Business Machines, when in fact we are universal art people.

# RAISING HACKLES

BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

## THE STATE OF SF MAGAZINES:

Don't ask.

Since 1974 and the demise of *WORLDS OF IF* the science fiction field has rarely seen more than half-a-dozen (if that many) viable magazines at one time. Genre SF was created and nurtured in the magazines for over a quarter century before book publishing (mainly paperbacks) exposed it to a new and demographically wider audience. In the last quarter century this area of science fiction has seen a steady downhill slide toward the oblivion of "small" literary magazines. Why has this happened? Is it important to SF? Can anything be done?

First let's take a look at recent history. With the exception of *ASIMOV'S*, every new magazine in the last dozen years has been a dismal failure. One quasi-exception, *OMNI*, has been fairly successful for Bob Guccione and Kathy Keeton of Penthouse Publications; how successful depends on who you talk to, but *OMNI* is a pop-science magazine with a smattering of features, which includes several SF stories, but science fiction has never been a major focus of the magazine. There are even periodic reports that some advertising people have been trying to kill SF in the magazine, but it's survived for six years and has had a science fiction story in at least every issue. There are many other efforts that have gone belly-up. In the mid-seventies, *VERTEX* was a west coast slick SF magazine that survived for several years before becoming a tabloid for three issues and folding. *ODYSSEY*, a less slick magazine, put out under the editorial auspices of the then ubiquitous Roger Elwood, lasted for two issues. I remember it for the many body building ads and for a savage artistic satire that Carl Bennett did of the first issue's cover. Also

in the mid-to-late seventies, *COSMOS*, edited by David Hartwell, survived for several issues. All three of these efforts started out as regular magazine (8 1/2 X 11") size.

*GALAXY*, a digest magazine started in 1950, limped along till 1979 or so when it was sold by Arnold Abramson to the publishers of *GALILEO*, an 8 1/2 X 11" size magazine found for most of its existence only in specialty stores. The publishers of *GALILEO* were never able to put out a newsstand-distributed issue of *GALAXY*, although one was printed up and a few copies floated around, mostly at huckster's tables at conventions. *GALILEO* itself folded when its publishers tried to turn it into a nationally distributed magazine. They signed a contract with Dell Distribution, but it never worked out. The last I heard several lawsuits had been filed over the matter.

Digest-sized efforts were fewer and singularly unsuccessful. *SKY WORLDS*, a cheapo reprint magazine never went anywhere. The publisher of *AMAZING*, Arthur Bernhard, tried several reprint magazines in the mid-seventies, none of them caught on, and *AMAZING's* sister magazine *FANTASTIC* folded. *AMAZING* was sold to TSR, which hired George Scithers to edit the magazine, but distribution has been spotty and sales reportedly have dropped off from when Bernhard's last editor Eleanor Mavor was running it. In fact, sales are so low that it is approaching the level (10,000 copies) which the *SWFA* has set for professional magazines. If circulation drops below that level, sales to *AMAZING* will not be considered for membership credentials in the *SWFA*, although a new TV show, produced by Spielberg,



*AMAZING STORIES*, an anthology show like *TWILIGHT ZONE*, might help sales.

There have been numerous semi-professional efforts. *RIGEL*, edited by Eric Vinicoff, was notable. *UNEARTH*, a magazine devoted to beginning writers, survived for a while. Several still exist: *INTERZONE*, *LAST WAVE* and *FANTASY BOOK*, among others.

But the largest category is magazines that never made it: *ALPHA*, *SPECTRUM* and *IMAGO*, to mention a few of the many. They failed to even appear for a variety of reasons. *SPECTRUM's* editor, March-all Bonfire (nee Bonafir) was reported to have committed suicide.

Hope does spring eternal or at least immortal in science fiction publishing. Even as another magazine was sinking out of sight with nary an issue (*WEIRD TALES*, edited by Forrest J. Ackerman -- or Gil Lamont, depending on whom you talk to -- truly a weird tale), a brand new magazine was announced at the '84 LA WorldCon: *L. RON HUBBARD'S TO THE STARS SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE*. Craig Miller is set as the managing editor with Terry Carr handling fiction and William Rotzler art. Budget, print run, national distribution and needless to say, the date of the first issue, have not been set yet. The payment scale is said to be approximately the same as *ANALOG* and *ASIMOV'S*.

Why all the failures? Because the would-be publishers either forgot, or they thought they could fudge the one cardinal rule of

publishing: Capital sine qua non -- money, without-which-nothing. Publishing, and magazine publishing in particular, is probably the most capital-intensive business in the world on the basis of funds expended for results desired.

It starts with planning and the problem of lead time. Editors have to be paid, stories have to be bought, offices have to be rented and money for printing and distribution has to be allocated, all of this long before any tangible results (forget about profits) come in. After the magazine is printed and on the newsstands it still takes several months for accurate figures on the newsstand sales to come in. The more ambitious your project, the more expensive. Let's say you want to do a magazine that is advertiser subsidized, like TIME magazine and OMNI instead of reader subsidized like most SF magazines. Then you have to hire an advertising staff and the lag time for advertising revenue also has to be calculated.

Just because a rich science fiction fan has a couple hundred-thousand to spare is no reason to go into the magazine business. An ambitious SF magazine that turns out to be a failure could eat up millions of dollars. Even if the magazine is a success it still could take millions to promote it into a success. You have to publicize the project and since telepathy and word-of-mouth are about equally effective, that means advertising. Guccione pumped several million dollars into pushing OMNI. Even a less ambitious magazine needs thousands of dollars.

The first step in the planning process is deciding the type of magazine; I'm not referring to content, just to how ambitious a project you want. Is the magazine going to be 8 1/2 X 11" or digest size? (Some feel that digest-sized magazines are the main problem with SF magazines because it is easily obscured on the newsstands. True, but most of the recent failures in the SF field have been magazines slated to be 8 1/2 X 11".) After you have decided that, you must secure sufficient capital. If you don't have funds to cover every conceivable possibility, quit while you're ahead. If you do, good luck, you'll need it.

Some of the above comments were observations based on experience. I was once involved with two magazines, SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS and SF BOOKLINE, that never got off the ground. Despite that, it was a learning experience and I feel good that no writer had a story published and was never paid

for it. It's better never to publish a magazine than to publish it and then never pay the writers.

I hope that despite the many pitfalls, someday somebody will publish a truly ambitious SF magazine, 8 1/2 X 11", slick paper, advertiser supported, payment rates for the fiction equal to what PENTHOUSE pays (about 25¢ per word), with a publicity budget of several million. I believe such a magazine would help the field greatly, bring in new readers and encourage old ones to read SF again, bring in new writers and encourage old ones. But above all, I believe such a magazine needs an Editor-in-Chief and a Fiction Editor who have a strong vision of where SF should be going. SF needs another John Campbell; also does an audience exist for such a magazine -- that's a column for another issue. I'd be interested to read your comments, sent in care of SFR magazine, or to my home address, 1899 Weissner Drive, NE, Salem, OR 97303.

#### POLITICS

Well, it's that time of the year, or every fourth year. Americans are going through the long-drawn out process of choosing a President, a new House, and a third of the Senate and the State Governments. Even a confirmed political junkie like me gets tired of the length of the political season, which seems to start on the day after the last presidential election. However, this year is interesting, America is turning rapidly to the right, some say the far right. This election will go a long way toward proving how far right, if at all. Others say that the Republican Party is poised to become the new majority party in America, in particular the South

is about to go as solidly Republican as it once was Democrat. A fanzine sent to me published a poll of 37 SF writers -- 26 said they were voting for Reagan, 6 for Mondale and 5 for David Bergland, the Libertarian Party candidate. I don't pretend to know the basic politics of the average SF fan or writer.

Lynden LaRouche, Independent candidate for President, bought an hour of time on CBS in the middle of the summer and used it to lambast General Daniel K. Graham, the High Frontier group and the L-5 Society as "conscious tools of the worldwide communist conspiracy." I missed most of the speech, but a friend told me that LaRouche also had unpleasant things to say about Jerry E. Pournelle. LaRouche and his group are on the fringes of American politics, but are emblematic of the danger posed by other radical groups in America. LaRouche's group has also attacked Isaac Asimov's Foundation Trilogy, claiming "it is a blueprint for a dictatorial takeover and control of America."

All in all, it should prove to be an interesting election and I will comment next issue on the coming polarization of politics in America and what it means to SF and censorship.

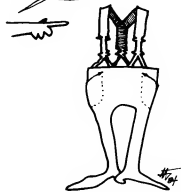
#### REVIEWS:

THE PEACE WAR  
By Vernor Vinge  
Bluejay Books, 286 pp., 1984, \$16.95

With "True Names," the award-nominated novella, Vernor Vinge moved into a small group of writers who are actually exploring new ideas in the SF mode. THE PEACE WAR is another idea (the gimmick is new) that although it's been done before, Vinge handles in a fresh and exciting way. The idea is what would the world be like if a somebody discovered the perfect force shield, which he calls bobbles. The twist is that bobbles surround and silence the attackers rather than being a defensive shield.

The story concerns Paul Hoehler, the scientist who invented bobbles and the people who stole and misused them. The narrative starts in the near future and rapidly shifts to about a hundred years from now, when those who control the bobbles, called the Peace Authority, have used them to dominate the world and stifle scientific research and development.

THE SOAP'S IN YOUR  
POCKET...NOW MARCH  
OVER AND GET IN THE  
WASHER!





THE PEACE WAR is true science fiction in that the new scientific knowledge introduced into the story, the bobbles, are crucial to the story and its resolution.

Vinge handles the narrative with smooth deft touches and rounds out his characters with delicate revealing scenes. The nuances of the future world created by the bobbles and the Peace Authority ring true and Hoehler's goal to destroy them makes for an exciting narrative. THE PEACE WAR is a well-written and thought-provoking book; it deserves to be nominated for the Hugo and the Nebula.

OMNI'S SCREEN FLIGHTS SCREEN FANTASIES  
Edited by Danny Peary  
Doubleday, 1984, Trade Paper  
310 pp., \$17.95

This is a thick, dense yet readable book that is extremely well edited and written. For once a book on SF films doesn't ignore the opinions of SF authors. Represented in this book with original essays are Isaac Asimov, Robert Bloch, Harlan Ellison, Harry Harrison, Frederik Pohl, Robert Schickley, Robert Silverberg and others.

The problem with the book is that the writing overpowers the material being discussed. SCREEN FLIGHTS, SCREEN FANTASIES looks at how the cinema views the future of mankind. Most of the films don't merit serious probing. Gathered together, these essays do point out that most SF films take a pessimistic, anti-rational view of science, technology and man's future.

If you're a serious enthusiast of SF films you'll love this book. Even if you're not, the essays make this an excellent buy.

YESTERDAY'S TOMORROWS: PAST VISIONS OF THE AMERICAN FUTURE  
Compiled by Joseph J. Corn & Brian Horrigan, Summit Books  
1984, 158 pp., Trade Paper, \$17.95

This book is copyrighted by The Smithsonian Institute and has been released in tandem with an exhibit that is touring the U.S. It is a fascinating, enthralling look back at how we once viewed the future. It is a nostalgic, thought-provoking book.

Its dated, slightly quaint views of the future that never was remind me all too much of most of present science fiction -- a large share of the writers in this field show



their affinity for these views of the future. And why not? Most of the major writers in the field were impressionable youths when these antiquated notions of tomorrow were in vogue.

A few examples: Remember the personal helicopter, the slide-walk, the gigantic multi-leveled, multi-tiered city, the atomic-powered tank, atomic-powered bomber or washable furniture. They're all here in this riveting look at yesterday's tomorrow. Check the Smithsonian for the exhibit's schedule. It's supposed to hit most major American cities. A great and long-overdue project.

I'd like to see a sequel, THE YESTERDAY'S TOMORROWS of Europe or Japan; it'd be an interesting contrast.



SUNSPACER  
By George Zebrowski  
Harper & Row, 1984, Trade Paper  
Juvenile, 309 pp., \$7.95

George Zebrowski is a serious thoughtful writer who deserves far more recognition than he gets. SUNSPACER is his latest novel. Don't let the juvenile tag turn you off; like the Heinlein juveniles this book can be enjoyed by everybody and has as much or more to say to adults as it does to teenagers.

Taking place in the near future, humanity is moving out into space and the story deals with Joseph Sorby, fresh out of high school and his adventures in space and on Mercury among the miners who live underground. As with most juveniles, SUNSPACER is a rite of passage, emotionally and physically, for the protagonist. Joe Sorby suffers the same doubts and fears that a lot of teenagers and adults harbor. Zebrowski handles Sorby and the other characters with a knowing compassion.

SUNSPACER is a smoothly enjoyable novel. It contains one scene near the beginning when Sorby is leaving Earth, and the excitement he felt brought back to me the excitement I felt on first reading science fiction. SUNSPACER is that rarest of SF books, a solidly-told story with a true sense of wonder.

EYE OF THE COMET  
By Pamela Sargent  
Harper & Row, Trade Paper, 275 pp.  
Juvenile, 1984, \$7.95

Another Harper & Row juvenile, a story that can be read and enjoyed by all. Pamela Sargent is a quiet storyteller who manages to paint pictures of people and events that have the small nuances of real life.

EYE OF THE COMET features Lydee, a girl living in the depths of space aboard a comet, whose destiny is to serve as a conduit between the humans on this comet and the humans on Earth who have rejected them and despise and fear their way of life.

An intriguing story that can apply to many problems here on Earth in the latter part of the 20th Century. How to overcome fear of the unknown and in some cases outright hostility toward those who live differently than you. It's a nice moral tale, buttressed by Sargent's clean, crisp prose, sympathetic handling of the people and minds that populate this future.

# and then i saw...

I WOULDN'T CALL MYSELF A COUCH POTATO...

but I do watch a lot of movies on cable---HBO, Showtime, Bravo, A&E... All these run uncensored films, of course. The network fare is almost always abysmally bland and idealistic pap, aimed at Liberal, right-thinking, feminist, "family" audiences.

That's curious, because the network audience is probably made up of mostly poor, black, old, non-cable outskirts areas of population where cable is not yet.

No wonder the networks are suffering a loss of watchers year by year, and a loss of prime spenders in that segment. Advertisers know.

Of course the networks are aware of this trend, but are unable to do much about it given their need never-to-offend the pressure groups who watch everything with a prejudiced, gimlet eye.

[Wasn't it delicious when CBS put a shotgun mike on John McEnroe during an altercation with the officials and The Brat said "...fucking..." for all America to hear. The commentator said bemusedly, "I think he disagreed with the call."

After that they showed John's mouth moving, but cut the sound. Hal! Speaking of McEnroe, his fierce competitiveness melded to his sullen paranoia and demand for perfection in others (especially linesmen and umpires) make him remarkably hateful and immature. I always root for his opponent. On a personal level, I wish he'd get a better shave for matches and have his muppy hair cut shorter.

But onward to the reviews-----

## SUPERDAD (G)

There was nothing else on and Disney was letting everyone watch three days of the Disney channel free...

The late Bob Crane played a masked incest-lured father determined to "join in" his daughter's peer group at any cost to keep tabs on her, etc.

We see a lot of bikini-clad girls including his stunning teen

daughter, and poor dad gets wiped out in sports with the kids and behaves like the idiot he is.

Cool, clean Barbara Rush played the mother--a bit part.

I couldn't watch this more than 30 minutes. Better Regis Philbin's Health Styles than this.

Disney of late has recognized that kid films don't make it anymore and have come out with that mermaid movie and an honest fantasy or two.

But in 1974, when SUPERDAD was made, the studio was still mired in the 50's.

## SMITHEREENS (R)

is the sad/desperate story of the life of a rock-n-roll groupie, a girl who aspires to be a singing star herself but does little to work as a singer. She lives hand-to-mouth, sponges on friends, rips-off friends, lives in a van with a young man who loves her, when it suits her, and lives in a desperate fools hell.

All this in the mean streets of New York. And at the end of the film it seems she is falling into prostitution.

Susan Berman does an excellent job as the rock-obsessed girl who is herself ripped-off by the fringe rock star to whom she has attached herself (she thinks).

## DEAL OF THE CENTURY (R)

follows Chevy Chase as a small-time arms hustler who tries to deal weapons to a latin American dictator, then to the dictator's opposition.

Failed, wounded in the foot, he falls into a high-tech deal with an unprincipled American corporation whose "state of the art" pilotless drone fighter plane runs amok and must be dealt to anyone at any cost.

Sigourney Weaver plays the beautiful woman involved in all this skulduggery and sex as she finally has to sleep with the dictator to clinch a deal with his government.

Add a born-again cohort whose Christianity is in dire conflict with his guns-for-sale profession,

and various screw-ups, mishaps and moronic satirical jabs at Big Business and you get a sometimes amusing low-blow message picture which misuses Chase and Weaver. This picture in beneath their stature and talents, but they sold out for money, too.

Noted: a balding, mean-faced Vince Edwards as the vicious corporation boss. Remember him as Dr. Casey on TV twenty-odd years ago? He quit the series to be a big movie star. He flopped.

## NIGHT OF THE JUGGLER (R)

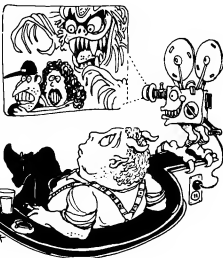
is taut and gut-level all the way, with good action and realism as a psycho kidnaps a 12-year-old girl to punish her millionaire real estate developer father whom he thinks has deliberately ruined his neighborhood in order to drive prices down and force landowners to sell cheap.

But the psycho has mistakenly kidnapped a look-alike girl---the daughter of a maverick ex-cop who witnesses the abduction and gives all-out, any-cost chase and search for the rest of the film.

James Brolin is excellent---shaggy-haired, bearded, single-minded.

Cliff Gorman is better as the pushed-over-the-edge building owner who is finally cornered and killed in hand-to-hand combat in the sewer/utility tunnels under New York.

Richard Castellano is fine as the pressured, harassed police lieutenant who has to deal with everyone involved.



# RICHARD E. GEIS

**THE BUNKER (R)** is a docudrama showing the last few months of Adolph Hitler's life in the bunker under the Chancellery in Berlin in 1944 (or was it 1945?). Well acted by Anthony Hopkins as Hitler. Good English supporting cast.

The film makes one want to know more about Hitler's warped psyche and the diseases which afflicted him.

Himmler's absolute fanaticism is eye-opening...and chilling, at the end.

**SURFACING (R)** features Kathleen Beller as a young woman searching for her missing father in the wilds of northern Canada. With her are her husband and their two best friends, a married couple.

There is a lot of intense personality conflict, estrangement, lust, hate, danger.

There are also a few nice nude scenes in which Beller bares all. She is here shown as rather chunky and stretch-marked, but her breasts are as lush as ever.

Not a bad picture, saved by the kinky marriage and behavior of Beller's friends. Joseph Bottoms plays her in-conflict husband.

**BREATHLESS (R)** shows the considerable acting abilities of Richard Gere as he plays utterly convincingly a young man who thinks he is above working and above the law. He is in the beginning a car thief by trade, but not a killer. But when stopped by a highway patrolman he yields to his need to be free at any cost and shoots the cop.

On the run after that...he hooks up with a young woman who is almost fatally attracted to his wild irresponsibility and "outlaw" charm.

In the end---in this remake of an earlier French film of 20 or so years ago---he chooses death to prison/execution.

I found Gere's character repellent and self-indulgent; I've had enough of smooth-talking con men and spoiled brats who were never weaned from the free lunch of childhood.

**THE LONELY LADY (R)** is utterly unconvincing as it traces the life of Pia Zadora as a would-be teen-age writer to a successful, Oscar-winning screenplay writer. Her road to success is a series of bedrooms, and her speech of acceptance at the awards ceremonies is the highlight of the movie; she tells them she is not the only one of their group who "fucked her way to success..."

Pia is a fair actress who has been mocked for her willingness to appear nude, often, and for her supposed lack of acting ability.

Lloyd Bochner plays the top-rank screenwriter who marries her and gives her her start.

Wotthehell, it's a "woman's picture" from a seamy book by Harold Robbins. It delivers precisely what it promises.

**SPACEHUNTER (Pg)** is a lot of sort-of-tongue-in-cheek space adventure with Peter Strauss as a 22nd Century mercenary trying to rescue some Earth women from the clutches of a space pirate who is more cyborg than human (and his weird, warped minions) on a trashed, South Bronx-type planet.

He is a tough-guy with a soft spot, of course, which shows when he encounters a waif, a pure-strain human girl, who acts as his guide and who has to be rescued at the end, a crisis which is a catalyst for their love.

Ah, formula, ah shit. It's fun to watch, though.

**TOOTSIE (Pg)** is a feminist message picture with more ramifications than the star, Dustin Hoffman, and the producers were aware of.

Excellent acting by Hoffman as an unemployed, purist, antagonistic actor who desperately dresses as a woman to try out for a soap opera role.

He gets it and is stuck with it and with growing fame as a woman-with-spunk. Because he is a man inside he feels able and free to argue, stand up for "his" rights, and make on-camera changes in the scriptline/dialog.

There are a series of personal complications, of course, but these are the usual comedy bits about keeping his girl friends from knowing, fending off male suitors, and being thought gay by his friends.

Dabney Coleman key his usual abrasive, shit-heel schtick as a macho, male chauvinist prick (as in NINE TO FIVE).

What must stick in a crowd of heavy-duty Feminists is that it took a man (as a woman) to tell their story so well in a hit picture.

A fine picture, well paced, well acted, interesting and funny.

**CURSE OF THE PINK PANTHER (Pg)** tries hard to equal the Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau (however it's spelled) movies, but Sellers was a genius and his inspired acting as

the perfect bumbler cannot be matched. Ted Wass as a klutzy New York detective imported to Paris does a creditable job, but... Without Sellers, this series is dead.

**STRANGE INVADERS (Pg)** is a minor sf movie about aliens who have taken over a small town and are secretly taking human souls/life force for transport to their planet.

Paul LeMat is a young father/husband who loses his wife and child to the aliens and fights back.

Usual paranoia scenario as no one will believe him, the govt is hostile to him, etc.

Conveniently the aliens can assume the shape and voices of the people they "take".

Worth watching.

**JAWS OF SATAN (R)** is a low-budget horror film which as usual cheats on the logic/plausibility side by invoking and depending on the supernatural powers of a demonic cobra loose and preying on key residents of a small town. It wants souls and a local self-doubting priest is the main target.

Fritz Weaver and Gretchen Corbett are the name actors. Corbett does a few nude scenes and shouldn't have.

The film is too contrived and exploitive...of religion, the occult, and sex.

**CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF (R)** is not the best version/rendering of this Tennessee Williams play about a tension-ridden, seething southern family, but it's good.

Rip Torn as Big Daddy didn't satisfy. Tommy Lee Jones as the alcoholic son with shameful secrets is very good. Jessica Lange as his itchy, nagging wife, Maggie, was praised by the critics, but I found she mush-mouthed and too-often whispered her lines, so that the viewer lost too much of the dialog.

But at least this production used the original lines, including the four-letter words excised/censored from earlier movie/TV versions.

**SWEET ALICE (X)** is a porn movie edited to Explicit-R (or X, if you will) content.

Stars are Seka, John Holmes, Desiree Costeau and Jaimie Gillis.

The thin story is about a small town girl gone wrong in Hollywood and how her husband pursues her to Hollywood. She isn't interested in be-

ing saved from the horrible degradation of making porn films, though, and he consoles himself with a new lady he has met in his search.

Lots of nudity and beginnings of sex. I felt cheated, of course, since without the full show this film (shown on Pay-Per-View at 11 PM) is a dud.

Don't bother with it.

#### BAD BOYS (R)

About a teenage city badboy played convincingly by Sean Penn, who is in a maximum security juvenile prison for accidentally killing a boy after a robbery is screwed up. [If memory serves.]

The gritty, gitty, obscene life in this prison is repellingly fascinating for its social structures which speak to social biology in a compelling affirmation: instinct in naked form dictates young male life, and the implication is that "civilization" and women only soften the power struggles and channel them. Here is the despised macho male in full...er...flower. Our societies and cultures are rooted in these structures.

#### EASY MONEY (R)

I was reminded of W. C. Fields as I watched this. Rodney Dangerfield isn't in W.C.'s class, but the plot of this story of a man forced to give up his eat-drink-smoke pleasures for one year in order to gain an inheritance of \$10 million is something Fields might have based a good movie on. Especially the disrespectful wife, mother-in-law, etc.

The R-rating is mostly for four-letter words.

But Dangerfield is a one-note comedian and this movie runs out of gags and gas before it ends.

#### WAVELENGTH (PG)

is a forgettable sf movie about the capture of three alien children by the Air Force and attempts to experiment upon them, dissect one of them. And about a young man and woman who try to rescue the kids.

Implausible, low-budget, so-so acting. Usual defeat for the arrogant Air Force General and enigmatic escape ending.

Watch it if you must.

#### DRAW! (R)

is a routine western with a few bad words and a brief fuzzy nighttime sex scene.

Kirk Douglas is a notorious gunslinger who is provoked by a lawman and shoots the lawman. Douglas is innocent but is forced to hole up in the hotel with a woman hostage. They fall in love, I guess.

The town hires a famous down-on-his luck gunfighter (James Coburn) to come in and dispose of Douglas.

These fine character actors/stars have some fun in their casual confrontation scenes.

In the end they fake a shootout death and get out of town (with the lady)...and some money.

This clunker was made by HBO to fill its schedule. Somehow, the movies and series produced by Showtime and HBO for themselves are almost always duds. Too predictable, too bland (even when they base a comedy series on three brothers, one of whom is gay).

#### STAY AS YOU ARE (R)

makes you wonder why Marcello Mastroianni is supposed to be such a great actor and male star. He plays one character all the time: a slightly flustered, confused, passive man who isn't quite sure why women are attracted to him. But he'll got to bed with them, sure.

And Natassia Kinski, with her sensual, strong beauty, is here wasted in the usual European manner as a girl inexplicably attracted to a middle-aged man who may be her father.

Did he screw his daughter?  
Who cares?

#### THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN (R)

made such a great impression on me that I cannot, now, for the life of me, remember it, 45 days after seeing it.

A shy teenager in love is reluctant to join his buddies in their pursuit of sexual experiences.



#### HEART LIKE A WHEEL (PG)

Like COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER, tells of a young woman with a talent and a skill who is driven to overcome all obstacles, at any personal cost, to become a professional and to achieve fame and fortune.

In this case it is the story of one tough lady, a funny car and race car driver, name of Shirley "Cha Cha" Muldowney.

Excellent portrayed by Bonnie Bedelia, supported by Beau Bridges.

#### THE BLOOD OF OTHERS (PG)

is a slow, bland, safe, HBO-financed movie about the Nazi conquest and occupation of France/Paris in WWII.

Jodie Foster plays the young woman intent on saving her lover and then helping the resistance. She's somewhat pudgy, now, and full-bodied.

This is a dull film, and not worth watching. But it does its job of helping to keep the story of the persecution of the Jews alive and well in America. The Zionists have the dictum: Never Again! and an unwritten rule: never let the American public forget, lest they not want to subsidize Israel so heavily year after year.



#### TEN YEARS AGO IN SF - FALL, 1974

BY ROBERT SABELLA

Avon Books issued a series of science fiction classics in "large format" (which ten years later would be called trade paperbacks). They sold for the extremely high price of \$1.95 as compared to "small format" books (mass market paperbacks) that generally sold for \$1.25 each or science fiction prozines which had just raised their cover prices to \$1.00 each.

P. Schuyler Miller died at age 62. He had reviewed books for ANALOG for twenty-five years.

Otto Binder died at age 63. With his brother Earl, he had written science fiction as Eando Binder.

Important publications included Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's THE MYTE IN GOD'S EYE; Samuel R. Delany's controversial DHALGREN; Robert Silverberg's original anthology NEW DIMENSIONS IV featuring Gardner Dozois' full-length novel STRANGERS; Terry Carr's UNIVERSE 5; Damon Knight's ORBIT 14; Roger Zelazny's HOME IS THE HANGMAN in ANALOG; and Richard Cowper's THE CUSTODIANS in F&SF.

# WE CAN REMEMBER IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE:

## THE PHIL DICK PROBLEM:

### EYE IN THE SKY

In his last years, Phil Dick believed that he lived under the benign influence of a cosmic force whose vectors coincided with those of his small apartment. (He would not seek better quarters for that reason.) The force whispered in his ear, gave him instruction, was largely responsible for VALIS, his metaphysical novel. The force assured him that most conventional assumptions of history and religiosity were insane and that humanity had essentially been worshipping the wrong icons for many centuries. (All of this is articulated not only in VALIS but in an interview with Charles Platt published in DREAM MAKERS: 1980.) Under the influence of this mentor, Dick's career flourished. DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? was bought for film and his works started to come back into print. For the first time in his career he began to see considerable amounts of money. In 1980, his last full year, he made \$165,000 and wrote his final novel, BISHOP TIMOTHY ARCHER as well as a few short stories which sold to OMNI and PLAYBOY. The consensus was that he had never been writing better nor had his work ever been more appreciated. Who was to say, then that his mentor was wrong? Any science fiction writer who had run the full course of a 30-year career could use some cosmic guidance: This was a field which was always difficult and intermittently murderous as Dick himself had occasionally observed. You found your friends where you could.

### THE ZAP GUN

One seeks to write an afterword in the style of a Phil Dick novel. Superficially this is easy -- many different strands of invention, only marginally related, occurring in what seems to be improvisatory fashion -- but actually it is not. Even in the bad Phil Dick novels and there are quite a few of them, the strands turn out to be more cunningly interrelated than one thought; accrue to a kind of maniacal correctness. Lord Running Clam's mitosis is, after all, a commentary upon the childless marriage of the Rittersdorf's. The Hebes of the Alphane moon are not only hebephrenics but perhaps, symbolic Hebrews, wandering through

## THE PHIL DICK SOLUTION

their maze of circumstance. Doctoral theses have been and will again be put together on less. Dick makes sense, that is what must be understood. Sometimes the sense is evasive, sometimes (as with the Bunny Hentman scripts) it is literally offstage but this stuff cannot easily be dismissed if at all.

Of course, this is not an insight shared outside this field or even held universally within science fiction. Dick himself reminded us of how absolutely awful, of how impossible it was to be a science fiction writer in the fifties. Science fiction writers were not even considered to be writers let alone figures of consequence. Dick hung out with street people who had never heard of him, accepted an autographed inscription by Herbert Gold as if it were consequential. Nonetheless, like the motonic Running Clam, Dick oozed through and around the doorways and interstices of genre and self. He got to you. He was the kind of writer who years later might make you say, "You know, that was crazy stuff but it's kind of like what's going on in this television studio/convention floor/orgy/classroom." He was scattershot but my how the pellets flew around the landscape! A zap gun for the terminally repressed. (Which he thought the straights, the non-SF people to be.)

Nonetheless, CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON was a problem: Superficially a jazzy novel with some of the most extravagant and provocative of all the Dick inventions, rearranged in dazzling patterns -- slime molds, lunatic colonies and their descendants, reactionary simulacraprobing the Communist countries, fictional characters far deeper and more pervasive than their creators like Ziggy Trots, like Hentman -- this is a novel which makes the most severe demands upon the reader; to an outsider it might be one of the least penetrable of all the novels, it makes ultimately, no sense. Of course, this was Dick's grand and grandest themes, that things make no sense whatsoever but for the literary literary critics this is an insight at which they would prefer to arrive in retrospect ("X shows us, then, a universe ultimately meaningless") than have to face in the very text of the novel, in a novel that page by page hurls seemingly unrelated extrapolations, characters and premises at the reader, daring the reader to make the connections, forcing the reader to the conclusion that there are no connections only to flaunt at him the possibility, ultimately, that all of this might, somehow tie. Dick was a specialist in this technique although it was one which would undoubtedly drive a Phillip Rahv or Irving Howe to the wall, assuming that these worthies would even acknowledge a science fiction writer which is doubtful. One does not know quite what THE PARTISAN REVIEW would make of this novel but one has a very, very good idea.

### THE UNTELEPORTED MAN

Of course, there are different levels of reality, of extrapolation, Dick noted this. "Your wife might leave you and take the child-

### DR. FUTURITY

So an afterword in the style of a Dick novel is no easy target, not even for that writer who was once found in print admitting that he prided himself on his ability to "imitate the style of any writer living or preferably dead." Like the defamatory description of the musicologist, one might be accused of getting the notes but missing all of the music.

ren and then the Martians would come into your living room." Yes, indeed. Dick did not merely compose alternatives to standard middle class disasters; he heightened and deepened them. Nonetheless, this most madly inventive and bizarre of contemporary science fiction writers (telepathic slime molds! simulacra with identity problems! lunatic civilizations in which the paranoids would be the elite!) wrote very close to home; this is perhaps the source of the unsettling power of even the weaker novels. CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON is about a failed marriage, an aggrandizing wife, sexual passion, thrall, impotence, financial jeopardy and distress, divorce, blackmail, adultery, guilt, self-loathing. No number of Running Clans nor self-hating simulacra will divert fully from that point. One can peer through the cloudy and difficult glass of this novel and see the author himself, the unteleported, detached man, writing of his own circumstances, dealing with his own horrors. Dick made no secret of his relations with women, his financial and marital woes and his many marriages, his bankruptcies, his searing periods of panic and poverty are very much on the record. The Dick reality invoked no Mageboom simulacra through which he could project himself; it gave him (at least not until the mid-seventies) no telepathic aliens to

render him comfort, all of these devices were piled situationally upon the circumstances which the novel recreated but at the base one can see the simple, throbbing, moral heart of Phil Dick, the unteleported writer, dealing as best he could with events which he at least felt insupportable.

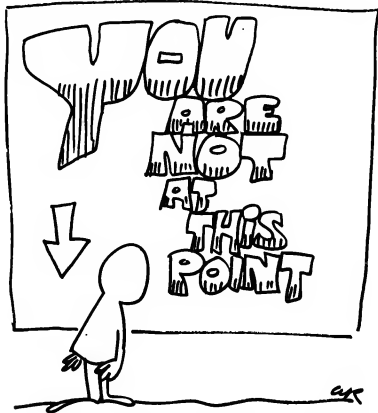
#### CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST

The novels would for an alert reader (do not look for them however in the academies) have been enough but Dick was perhaps the least shielded of all science fiction writers; he spoke off the text with great forthrightness and no small amount of self-evisceration. The fan magazines, the introductions to the various collections, the interviews all show a man inexhaustibly bent upon explaining himself as if the explanations themselves would find a kind of structure that the disorderly events themselves did not. Similarly, if the writer overexplained, the novels overly exposed; not for Phil Dick understatement or influence but instead the flat delivery of extrapolation. It is not enough to conceive of a moon of lunatics, their heirarchy and interrelationships must be explained. At the same time, on the other hand, there are curious el-

isions. What is that Ganymeden slime mold doing surviving unsupported in the conceived-nightmare-of-Rittersdorf's housing, anyway? What is its support system? How does that girl turn back the clock on the recent dead and why has the Alphane colony been permitted to reach this point when an influx of staff and medical personnel would have prevented all of this? How is the Mageboom simulacrum controlled? Exactly what do those reactionary simulacra say in the Communist territories and why are they permitted to wander freely? Oh, there are profound elisions in this novel, profound elisions indeed; so much is taken for granted, so little is often explained that the possibility might be raised -- how absolutely shocking! -- that Dick is not writing science fiction at all.

#### WE CAN BUILD YOU

The assumption from the start (the start being 1926 and Hugo Gernsback or something like that anyway) was that science fiction was a reasonably rigorous medium, that unlike fantasy it was rooted in some kind of extrapolative probability and that it made at least gestures toward credibility. The rules were honored more in the breach than the observance by many writers from the very start but the obeisance was always there; there was underneath a presumption of logic and scientific rigor and Dick emerged from that tradition, his short stories appeared in all of the genre magazines, his novels were published by the category publishers, he never, unlike Vonnegut, unlike Kuttner, unlike Bradbury deviated from the conventional markets or audience and yet Dick was, by Gernsback standard, less of a science fiction writer from the start than any of these figures and became even less than that as he went on. He had all of the apparatus -- the novels on the surface look like nothing but science fiction with their rocketships, robots, androids, intergalactic public address systems, talking toasters, lifelike mechanical animals, power-crazed solar administrators and this and that and so on and so forth, but one does not have to be far into a Dick novel or long in the ploy of its visions to understand that there is something out of kilter here. Even Van Vogt -- whom Damon Knight has described as Dick's one great influence and avatar -- would have taken more time and trouble to lay out the history of the Alphane colony, would have codified St. Ignatz the Hebe a lit-



tile more carefully. Hal Clement would have worked out ten closely reasoned pages as to the survival of Lord Running Clam but even the Kuttners, who knew a few things about elisions, would have tried a little bit of careful, worked-in explanation:

It was the Slime Mold's remarkable ability to survive in Earth atmosphere which so unsettled Rittersdorf and yet if Chuck had thought about it, had gone to the right sources, he would not have been disconcerted. For there it all was in the first annals of the Ganyedan search committee: the referent is a universal solvent, the physicists had found and through the years, ignored by the populi who found Slime Molds confusing or humorous depending upon their orientation, that solvent had been carefully applied --

But this does not concern Phil Dick, this was not his methodology at all; that slime mold oozed and cruised and bruised and lazed its way around the consciousness of all concerned because that simply was the way that things were and if Lord Running Clam was a metaphor, well, that was something that the reader would have to figure out on his own because for Phil Dick Lord Running Clam was a reality, an integral part of a plot which seemed so loose and sprawling that there seemed to be no order at all. But for Dick there was an obvious order; these plots made sense because they had an appalling reality which gave them absolute power, in the world that he inhabited comedians were in the employ of intelligence agencies, simulacra were rigged to blow up and kill you and telepathic slime molds might turn out to be the only dependable friend a man might find; metaphors come after the fact, Dick might have said and are only in tranquility reflected. In the common reality there is only event and it is the novelist's responsibility to record that reality. Not necessarily to assemble but simply to represent. The assembly was accomplished by the material itself. We can build you.

#### TIME OUT OF JOINT

Dick struggled. Most of his novels fell out of print within six months of their issue; until the late seventies he had little reason to hope or believe that any of this work would ever be seen



again. So he evolved what in science fiction was an already acknowledged technique but never taken perhaps to the limits that he had: He wrote novels whose style, characters and movement were designed for obsolescence. Knowing that the books would be seen only by a relatively small core audience of genre readers and by only one generation at that, he worked in the broadest and crudest terms populated the books with characters and circumstances which could be carried over to other novels but which on their own were meant to have quick and stunning effect but which were not meant to last. The novels, like dreams, functioned in terms of their episodicness; their various parts might live again, reassembled, in other works at other times but they could be broken down quickly, disassembled almost as rapidly as they were put into place. The out-of-print genre novelist learns to work synoptically and to keep on the move.

The novel then, as Potamkin Village. The scenes, when persecuted, have an enormous power, a frightening implication, seem to tremble (this was Dick's specialty) upon the verge of some terrific insight but never quite reach it, back off instead. The loathing Rittersdorf feels for Mary, the terrific power and sadistic implication of the one sex scene in which she participates, the drollery of Lord Running Clam, the odd, bleak masks worn by Rittersdorf's co-workers when they grill him (Dick had obviously already met some FBI agents), the panic mounting in St. Ignatz as it begins to occur to him that he may not be the redeemer ... all of these have enormous force, an absolute conviction as they are being read but they are compartmentalized, do not link into one another, consist in the time-honored fashion of the novelist of contrivance, of manipulated problems with manipulated and offstage solutions. (The final independence and salvation of the colony is ir-

relevant to all of the discussions and events before.) Any of these sections, perhaps all of them, can be extracted then, placed in another novel, in another circumstance to equal effect; some novelists from the academies are taught to build their novels to last but genre writers who come from a different school can absorb a different and equally important lesson: Novels can be built to self-destruct, to do themselves in, to live in other days in other ways. This is where the necessity of the writer and the needs of the genre audience can also be said to intersect; if the novel is a Potamkin Village then the reader can return to the landscape knowing that he need be concerned only with that small and synthetic part of it. Perhaps this seems disjointed, the absolute reversal of the standard novelistic process (as the Rahvs and Howes, anyway would rationalize it) but science fiction is a strange and specialized field, a far-reaching and unconventional genre of opposition as Hugo Gernsback, John W. Campbell and Harlan Ellison would all hasten to remind us.

#### SOLAR LOTTERY

But Phil Dick would not be the first or fiftieth science fiction writer to tumble to yet another subtle but destructive fact: The audience in the main wants its Potamkin Villages, wants its novels and authors built for obsolescence, would prefer that its Slime Molds and Simulacra slink along in alien circumstances without reference to life support devices or the functioning of civil liberties issues. The implications and meaning of real science fiction are quite terrifying; a real science fiction that would truly come to terms with the awful possibilities of the machine and of time would be unsalable or repugnant to the majority of an audience which is seeking titillation and satisfaction of a more reasonable order. So Dick was functioning within the grand tradition of the form when

he acted, it could be argued, to trivialize his material, trivial his visions and his future in order to conform to the needs and requirements of a 60,000-word paperback-original format and of an audience which read to get away rather than to get near. It is possible to see these novels as fundamental evasions of their material; it is possible to see CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON as a work which domesticates, tames, trivializes and disperses implicitly terrifying material.

That material: angst, alienation, anomie, insanity, loss, fury, greed, evil, impotence, various species of human delusion, alien delusion, political apostasy, all of these issues float through and around the haze of the work and yet rather than closing in upon them, CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON tends to retreat; its characteristic paragraph, paraphrased, comes in again and again:

Hands in his pockets he began to walk aimlessly down the sidewalk tunnel. And each minute, feeling more and more scared and desperate. Everything was falling apart around him. And he seemed helpless to halt the collapse; he could only witness it, completely impotent, snatched up and gripped by processes too powerful for him to understand.

This is the Phil Dick character; it may be the science fiction reader. Helpless to halt the collapse, more and more scared and desperate, snatched up and gripped by processes too powerful for him to understand, the science fiction reader looks for answers within the format of the assimilable, the \$2.50 or \$2.95 (in Dick's time it was 50¢) paperback original that will give him some illusion of control, that will codify the forces that appear to be squeezing his

life away. Sex and death, pain and passion exist in these novels but they seem to be taking place behind glass, in a dreamlike state, perceived as if at a great distance:

At no time did he truly lose consciousness. Therefore he was aware that much later the activity in which he was caught began by degrees to abate. The artificially-induced whirlwind diminished and then at last there was a fitful peace. And then -- by an agency which remained obscure to him -- he was physically moved from his place on the floor, from Dr. Mary Rittersdorf's compartment, to some other place entirely ... I wish I was dead, he said to himself.

This is Baines after the book's one explicit sex scene (extraordinarily explicit and even poetic by 1964 science fiction standards, it must be noted) and what emerges from this more than anything else is that not only the prose but the attitudinization of the character put the act at a distance, render it both unspeakably difficult and somehow irrelevant. There is more tenderness, more benignity to Lord Running Clam, more grace if one will, than there is in Mary Rittersdorf or in the sex that she is offering. If one believes that the stereotype science fiction reader, usually male, usually adolescent, usually sexually troubled and ambivalent, usually in flight from sexual feelings that he can neither master nor dismiss, if one believes this (Martin Gardner draws precisely this stereotype in his 1956 RAIDS AND FALLACIES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE, a very alert book about cultism but I do not think that it is entirely true or was even true for its different time) then CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON and the other Phil Dick novels can be

seen ironically enough -- despite their iconoclasm, despite their invention, despite their fertility and their political alertness, quite unusual within the form for its time or even now -- as catering precisely to the needs of that audience; rather than pushing limits, the Dick novels conformed to them and all of the pizzazz -- hebeephrenics, CIA men, lunatics, time-reversals, simulacra, slime molds -- was merely a means of putting the reader off the scent of his own weaknesses, dressing up the evasions to look like daring investigations. Potemkin Villages, in short. But this is not necessarily fair to Dick who knew from the very beginning (witness his 1953 story, "Imposter," which appeared in ASTOUNDING -- his only sale to this magazine -- near the outset of his career) that the matter of reality and fantasy, humanity and alienness was so academic, so much a matter of suggestion, that one could not be sure at any given time what one was or why. This is truly a difficult vision, difficult to sustain, difficult to work through thirty-five or forty anguished novels and Dick must be credited, surely, for holding consistent to it through the end; if the universe was a lottery, Dick held no pretensions as to knowledge of the payoff.

#### FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID

A cerebral hemorrhage or series of them killed Phil Dick in his 55th year in early March, 1982, surely a Phil Dick novelistic ending to his life; on the borders of vast public acceptance, BLADE RUNNER about to open, old novels rushing back into print, new money pouring into the money market accounts, on the brink of the long-sought Payoff Years, the writers' equivalent of the Million Dollar Wound, Phil Dick copped the strokes and died five days later in the hospital never having regained consciousness and probably having been brain-dead from the moment of occlusion.

Chuck Rittersdorf would have understood (or Jason Taverner or Mr. Tagoni or a couple of hundred other guys); probably Dick himself did and his last moments might have been -- it is difficult to posit material like this -- of awful knowledge, even a kind of grim and terrible satisfaction at seeing things working, themselves out so truly. But Dick had seen it coming for many years; the small and large damages of his career, the financial horrors, the political scrapes,





the years on the street, the heart attack in 1974 (which put him in the oxygen tent so that he could receive papers from one of his wives demanding back alimony at the cost of putting him in jail). Not only his life but his novels contain that premonition; no one in a Dick novel expects any real good and very few of them find it. There are occasional exceptions, someone, after all, has to hit the solar lottery every game even if it is not you, but this is not the image of the writer or the work which persists; what persists is that image of Rittersdorf assaulted by forces, of the Dick protagonist battered and shrugging, shrugging some more, seeing it through. In the most basic sense Phil Dick did carry it all the way through, no less than his protagonists but this does not prevent the career from somehow exuding a sense of waste, the same waste that seems to come from most careers in this category; truncated possibilities, wholesale elisions of possibility, small and large failures in the body of the work. Still, what is to do? One is writing within the perimeters of limitation for an audience which has proven over and again its reluctance to deal with the downside of the future, the true implication of the present; one can go so far but no further at the cost of losing markets and the audience and certainly Dick was aware of these limitations from the outset.

Nonetheless, one can see the waste, in the career, in this novel; one must face it no less than the Dick protagonist, if dragged by the neck to some awful possibility, would not hesitate to look at it. Buried in CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON is an entirely different novel, a novel for which this apparatus and invention is merely a paradigm: It is a novel of divorce, alienation, suffering, exploitation; it is a novel (written about the same time as Ken Kesey's ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST) which depicts the asylum as both more stratified and more sensible than the outside, a novel which points out that our political leaders are insane and their devices unspeakable; a novel which points out that these unspeakable devices are probably the outcome of their own sexual and emotional crippling and longing. This is the novel-within-the-novel that has not gotten written but Dick was not Updike or Cheever, Styron or Richard Yates; this novel of contemporary suburbia or contemporary politics was beyond him, he was interested in manipulating and reordering the more familiar devices of his category (devices which would have been wholly unfamiliar to these other writers or their audi-

ence) and if through them only dimly can be seen the outlines of the novel that might have been written, that is the problem of the reader, not the writer who can claim to have had his own purposes in mind. If CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON trashes its material at almost every turn, if it deserts implication in search of ever-increasing invention, if it seems to have left motivation and even compassion in the lurch in search of ever jazzier and more synthetic effects, this must be understood not only as part of the nature of the category but part of the nature of the characters ... their pain is great, their difficulties are real, they no more than the author are in shape to confront what is really going on inside.



NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR

So ultimately one must reach some assessment of this novel that is also an assessment of the career (because CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON is probably a novel as characteristic of the Dick oeuvre as anything he wrote; it utterly enacts all of his obsessions and most of his continuing devices) and yet this is not so easy, it cannot be rapidly achieved if at all; Dick's material was profound and his intentions (if not always his devices) were dead serious. If CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON fails -- a judgment arrived at with reluctance

but deliberately -- the failure is not so much of the novel as of the category itself; there is, pace Rahv and Howe, perhaps only so much that can be achieved within category science fiction and then no more; the effects will do you in all the time to say nothing of the audience. It is easier to deal with slime molds than the small and terrible corruptions of the heart; easier to see the simulacrum in the streets of Budapest than the deadly small cracks in the heart; it is easier to counterfeit a CIA or FBI that is flatly crazy than to apprehend the even crazier (because absolutely sane) CIA and FBI which, along with the other institutions, exists, and imperils. At 3¢ a word, writing pell mell, doing what one can for the front money and hoping for the best, one must take one's effects where one can, one's small satisfactions where they lie and hope for the best. CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON was written for \$1500 (\$750 on signature, \$750 on delivery) as a paperback original for Ace Books during that last good year of most of our lives, 1963, and for the first ten years of its existence accumulated to the author (after commissions had been deducted) considerably less than \$2,000; this was not good money even for the time and in light of the ambition, the invention, the energy of the book, the question of return is appalling. Now wait for last year: If it were to come again it might have (one thinks of Willy Loman on his deathbed clutching Jack Burden's hand in ALL THE KING'S MEN) all been different, maybe so, maybe not, it cannot be said to matter, because the fact is --

The fact is that it will not come again; that this is all we have, that the counter-clock world is unknown to those of us locked in more common time and that what has been done is what will be known. The great visionaries, the great, cracked dreamers like Phil Dick felt differently and for a little while, taken into the abysses of their intellect, the arc of their dreams, the abyss of their consciousness we are led to feel differently but whether this is kind or degree we cannot know. It is the mid-eighties. Phil Dick is dead. Lord Running Clam, metasized, will be known again but not -- and he warned us of this -- in the same way.

But as we remember Lord Running Clam, so doth he -- as was prophesied by the Elder One -- remember us.

New Jersey: December, 1983

# OTHER VOICES

SABAZEL

By Lillian Stewart Carl  
Ace Books, 1985, \$2.75

REVIEWED BY ARDATH MAYHAR

In this strong and thoughtful first novel, Lillian Carl brings the "feminist" novel to maturity. There are no propagandist touches here, just the tale of two strong and independent people, Danica and Bellasteros, who learn that they can be friends and lovers, allies in a world too long torn by divisive religions and factions. These two, taught in their own contexts to look down on the "other" sex, find their true counterparts in one another. They pursue their own duties and goals, independently and together, willingly and protestingly, remaining true to their inner lights without demanding that the other relinquish either strength or independence, in the end.

The world they inhabit is well-realized, though a bit too derived from the Greek for complete comfort. The political and religious machinations are intricately worked out. The fantastic elements are gorgeously visual, as well as being filled with adventure and courage and peril.

Though not flawless (what book is, truly?), this novel is a fine example of the functions of fantasy in the examination of human beings in the process of learning, growing and accepting. While hard-s-f does that for institutions and technologies, fantasy seems to be the best vehicle for such understanding of ourselves as inter-relating beings. In SABAZEL, Carl has provided such an in-depth look at our kind, for those who read beneath the surface of wonder and action.

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## BRISINGAMEN

By Diana L. Paxson  
Berkley, 1984, \$2.75  
ISBN 0-425-07298-3 261pp.

REVIEWED BY CHARLES DE LINT

With her move from Timescape/Pocket, the thrust of Diana Paxson's writing has changes as well. Where her earlier novels dealt with Wiccan-based cultures in California after a holocaust, her new novel BRISINGAMEN is a high fantasy set in present-day San Francisco. It promises a great deal, with its concept of

the old Norse gods manifesting in contemporary society, and delivers most of that promise.

Wiccan, or more correctly in this novel, pagan beliefs are once again a major concern to the protagonist and, while there come a few points where they threaten to overpower the narrative, they are used judiciously for the most part. As in Marion Zimmer Bradley's THE INHERITORS (Tor, 1984), they become pivotal plot devices, making the time spent on "cleansing" houses and other ceremonies important to the overall appreciation of the story.

The basic plot has one Karen Ingold discovering the Brisingamen necklace and being possessed, from time to time, by its original owner, the goddess Freya. Freya's manifestations bring her old enemy Loki to San Francisco. They take up their old feud and the story bounces merrily on, with bikers, conjuring magicians and the Norse gods all playing their part. Imagine: Odin in a Harley!

BRISINGAMEN is an emotive book with a great deal of care spent on its characterizations. There are a few in-jokes (such as having Paul Edwin Zimmer show up at a poetry-reading where some of the major characters have gathered), a great deal of excellent historical data on the Norse and pagan customs, and while for my tastes the battle scene near the end of the book was a bit too lengthy and obviously choreographed, all in all BRISINGAMEN is a fine novel.

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## WEST OF EDEN

By Harry Harrison  
Bantam hardcover, illus by Bill Sanderson, 453 pp. + 27 pp glossary \$15.95

REVIEWED BY PAUL MCGUIRE

The current theory explaining the rapid end of the dinosaur age is that a meteor six miles in diameter struck the Earth, and among its disastrous effects, the ash and debris thrown into the atmosphere cut off the ultra-violet rays from the surface. What if that was the cause but had never happened?

PHILOSOPHER KING IS NO BIG DEAL. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS RATIONALIZE YOUR PARANOIA.



In the land WEST OF EDEN, a saurian life form evolved into the niche held by Mankind. Intelligent, humanoid, two opposing thumbs per hand, roughly human-sized, they call themselves the Yilane. Their science has been devoted to genetic engineering. As in writings of Jack Vance and Richard E. Geis' ONE IMMORTAL MAN, much of what we build, they grow. And much of what we manufacture, they breed. The cloaks they wear and the rifles they carry are living creatures. An animal has even been bred for unobstructed organic lens so that it can be used as a microscope. In an example of parallel creation with John Brunner's THE CRUCIBLE OF TIME, their large ocean ships are genetically adapted marine creatures. Marvelously inventive, the details of the customs, social structure, religion, politics, philosophy and psychology of the exotic Yilane is unobtrusively woven through the narrative.

Climatic changes are destroying their cities and driving them North after retreating warmth. An ambitious Yilane named Vainite is sent to a new land to command the forces there who are growing a large city for her people to migrate to A.S.A.P. In the new land are new dangers, chief among them a clever, but murderous, animal which speaks. They call themselves the Tanu, but we have labeled them Cro-magnon Man.

The novel is told from both Human and Yilane viewpoints. The main character is Kerrick. When still a young child, he was in the small Tanu hunting party which ventured far South and first encountered the colony of the much advanced Yilane. He was present for the incident that started a war of total annihilation between the two species. Not long after, Kerrick survives the massacre of his tribe and is taken to the Yilane city a prisoner.

Not only is the concept of lying unknown among the Yilane, but they are incapable of doing it.

As an experiment, Kerrick had been taught to speak the saurian language. When Vainte realizes that the boy can state as a fact something which is not a fact, he becomes a favorite of hers, and is embroiled in plots, and gains status.

By the time he next encounters a human, Kerrick has all but forgotten his origins, yet a moment's rash act forces him to flee back to the Tanu tribes. His knowledge of the species trying to exterminate humanity allows Kerrick to become a leader during the time of changes brought by the war of attrition. Using dinosaurs for mass transportation, as did Pellucidarians, a huge army of Yilane is sent against the gathering tribes. After that battle, the nomadic hunter Tanu make exodus over the mountains where a new race of men, settled agrarians, are found. But Kerrick knows that the Yilane will never stop searching for them since their greatest passion is now to slaughter the last of the Human animals.

And you ain't read nothing yet. Those are only a very few of the highlights of this epic plot. Whatever you like in your reading, it is probably here; serious writing, rip-roaring adventure, rich characterizations of both Human and non-Human, vivid experiences and perceptions, societies undergoing tumultuous change ... WEST OF EUDEN is Harry's blockbuster, a terrific read. You owe it to yourself not only to buy this book, but to purchase it in hardback. Even in a disposable age, this beautiful volume is a keeper.

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#### THE LAGRANGISTS

By Mack Reynolds  
TOR Books, 1983, 287 pp., \$2.95

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

I've been intrigued by the L-5 proposal and have read many novels about space settlements.

Here Mack Reynolds proposes a U.S. developed "Island One" and details his ideas through the conversations and actions of the main characters. He envisions this island as a utopian society, salvation of man and civilization, and opposed by what he sees as repressive, criminal or reactionary groups, including the Mafia, the Soviet Union, fundamentalist religious movements and the oil industry.

The novel is a good read and provides a newcomer with a good introduction to L-5 ideas, but is handicapped by its overly simplistic world view and cardboard charac-

ters. Mack Reynolds has done much better writing and this book is not up to his standard.

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#### THE RAINBOW CADENZA

By J. Neil Schulman  
Simon & Schuster, 1983, \$15.95

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL GROSSBERG

THE RAINBOW CADENZA explores new ground in science fiction, boasting some of the most erotic, pornographic and even scatological material I've ever read.

And yet J. Neil Schulman's novel has no gratuitous sex scenes, instead integrating its pathbreaking eroticism into a complex, colorful story about a future earth where birth control advances have had a radical and damaging effect on sexual equality and personal liberty.

When men gain the unilateral power to control the sex of their children, many more males than females begin to be born. Centuries later, sociological trends have culminated in a new kind of involuntary servitude: women are drafted by the military to serve as prostitutes.

For a male writer attempting only his second novel, Schulman has mastered the difficult task of creating convincing female characters. His Joan Seymour Darris is a memorable, truly heroic heroine. Her struggle to liberate herself from coercive male patriarchy will be of particular interest to fans of Ursula LeGuin and Joanna Russ.

But THE RAINBOW CADENZA should be of even more interest to fans of Spider and Jeanne Robinson whose STARDANCE imagined a new type of space-age artform. For the most intriguing thing in Schulman's multi-generational feminist family saga is the artform that gives his novel its name. The rainbow in the RAINBOW CADENZA is the result of a new visual/musical art form in some ways reminiscent of the laser shows

ON THE WHOLE, A KING  
WHO LOVES WOMEN IS A  
BETTER RULER THAN ONE  
WHO LOVES WISDOM.

THERE IS NO LIMIT  
TO THE NUMBER OF  
JUMPS IDEAS YOU CAN  
EMBRACE!



now being produced occasionally by a few planetariums and rock groups, but literally light years beyond them.

By making art as well as sexuality his story's central focus, Schulman is able to dramatize graphically the disastrous consequences of authoritarianism in that most personal of all realms: the human spirit. More than most science fiction novels, THE RAINBOW CADENZA not only succeeds as imaginative, speculative fiction, it also succeeds as a psychological thriller, bringing its characters vividly to life.

I will never forget Joan Darris. I suspect that after reading THE RAINBOW CADENZA, no one else will either.

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#### THE RIDERS OF THE SIDHE

By Kenneth C. Flint  
Bantam, 260 pp., \$2.95

REVIEWED BY ALMA JO WILLIAMS

Kenneth Flint has again reached into Celtic myth for this adventure just as he did for A STORM UPON ULSTER, but what a difference! ULSTER was adventurous and tragic in the grand manner of the Arthurian legends. RIDERS is adventurous and non-tragic and ... well, the author has made it into a Celtic StarWars. Lugh, a boy of unknown ancestry (to himself) is set adrift in a magical boat when his foster-mother's castle by the sea is attacked by the Pomors, the then current oppressors of Eire. He is picked up by Manannan, the Sea-god and sent back to Eire, to Tara, residence of the then High-King, Bres, a real stingy sod if ever there was one. Through one adventure after another, he comes to the attention of the Tuatha de Danann, the god-like heroes, who were deposed by the Pomor and Lugh is then given the task of freeing Ireland from the Pomor -- this according to the fulfillment of ancient prophecy. The rest of the story will be finished in another book to be published later this year.

Balor, the head of the Pomor, is a cross between Darth Vader and Sauron, what with his black attire and red laser beam eye. The stronghold of the Pomor, a glassy tower in the sea just off the coast of Ireland, is complete with elevators, conveyor belts, freezers and electricity. One gets the distinct impression that the Pomors, who came across the sea, are the remnants of Atlantis, who messed around with nuclear power, for they show evidence of radiation burns and any children of theirs, sired on the local peasantry are incredibly deformed, thus showing genetic damage.

I did some research on Celtic gods and learned that Lugh's father was one of the Tuatha De Danann, his mother, one of the daughters of Balor. Bres is half Pomor -- his father being Balor. It was ancient custom that the male child be given to foster parents to be reared, thus Lugh's knowledge of his real parents is vague. In Celtic legend, Lugh of the Long-Arm, one of the more powerful and popular gods, could be equated with the Greco-Roman Apollo. He is also reputed to be the father of the greatest of Irish heroes, Cu Cuhlann, whom we met in STORM, even though the events in both instances were separated in time by hundreds of years.

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MOONGATHER  
MOONSCATTER  
By Jo Clayton  
DAW Books, \$2.95 each

REVIEWED BY JANRAE FRANK

Since 1980 when the anthology *AMAZONS* (edited by Jessica Amanda Salmonson) took the World Fantasy Award there have been increasing numbers of female protagonist fantasy novels. Two-thirds of the new fantasy novels from DAW have a woman as the central character. Berkeley-Ace has published several remarkable feminist novels. But all too often the new rash of female protagonist novels have contained little in the way of feminist consciousness and have dealt only superficially with actual female issues and experiences. The most notable exception to this rule is Jo Clayton's *Duel of Sorcery* trilogy, of which the first two volumes are out and the third forthcoming, *MOONGATHER AND MOONSCATTER*. This is, inarguably, one of the first feminist trilogies ever written (as opposed to simple female protagonist fantasy trilogies of which there have been a few).

In our own world the earliest civilizations were either matriarchal or matrilineal. These cultures were followed by a period of transition when the Great Mother was still worshipped but men held the reins of power. It is during such a period of transition that Jo Clayton has chosen to set this alternate world fantasy.

A budding patriarchal religion, the "Followers of the Flame," is trying to supplant the traditional worship of the Goddess and bring in a new religious regime based on a male idea of order, control and power to force their concept upon all they come in contact with. The exoteric form of this religion is controlled by an esoteric coven, the Nearga Nor, a cult of male sorcerers. The high-

est rank of their adepts are possessed of awesome, nearly god-like power and have achieved virtual immortality. But, in the first rites of initiation all of the Nor, from the least to the greatest, have undergone ritual castration and sacrificed their power of reproduction. Because they can never give rise to new life the Nearga Nor hate the nurturing, life-giving Goddess---and women as a sex by implication.



The mightiest of the Narga Nor, having grown bold, decides to extend the emotionless order and control of the Nor to the entire world. He will end change and death and therefore birth and life-giving---no matter how many must die to bring his new order. But Reiki Janja, the avatar of the Goddess, challenges him and thus they begin their contest for control of the world.

"Ser Noris, my Noris, too many people are going to die from this game of yours." (Reiki Janja)

He crossed to stand behind her. "They die every day in that chaos you call life, Janja. What's the difference?"

"Take care, my Noris. If you discover the answer to that question, I'll have won the game."

Ser Noris selects as his playing piece a mutant daughter of a nomad race called the Windrunners, the child Serroi, who was destined for a fiery death because of her differentness.

Janja grants him Serroi the child, but then chooses the woman Serroi will become as her own player, puzzling Ser Noris.

Green-skinned Serroi possesses the power of empathic control over animals and through her, riding like a psychic parasite in her mind, Ser Noris learns to twist life: he forces her, through his psychic mastery to use her power to kill her beloved

pets and then raises them from the dead as demon forces completely under his control. He tries to teach Serroi to take the joy in his experiments he does. At first she basks in his attention and studies hard to please him. But when his arcane explorations destroy her animals Serroi's spirit rebels and she opposes him bitterly.

Her rebellion causes Ser Noris some small regret (whether for Serroi the person or Serroi the tool is not yet certain). But when he decides that he cannot bear her rebellious presence any longer---partly to teach her a lesson and partly to prevent Reiki Janja's taking her in to the Goddess's tutelage, Ser Noris abandons Serroi in the middle of a terrible desert.

Serroi will neither repent of her rebellion nor yield to death. She encounters Reiki Janja and for a time comes under the Goddess's influence and teachings. But Serroi does not stay, for she now finds all magic abhorrent. Instead she finds her way to the Biserca in the Valley of Women where an ancient order of amazons beloved of the Maiden have trained their shrine keepers, warriors and healwomen for countless ages. In that valley this small enslave holds to the old ways and struggles against the animal-demons that Ser Noris created through the powers of the unfortunate Serroi. There Serroi is trained and becomes meie, a warrior pledged to childlessness---but not chastity.

The back story is told in alternating chapters with the plot of *MOONGATHER*. Serroi and her shield-mate Tayaan are working a three-year ward, a system in which the Biserca gains a fee and the Meie a salary, as harem guards for the Lord of Miljoc, the Dom Hern Heslin. Returning from an illegal race and its equally illegal gambling, they accidentally overhear a plot against the Dom led by his two head wives. They are discovered and pursued by a minor Nor who is apparently in service to the Dom's wives. Tayaan is slain and Serroi flees; but later turns back to warn the Dom and uncovers a plot that goes far beyond the simple coup she first overheard in the harem rooms. When several more Nor of greater ability than the one responsible for Tayaan's death become involved Serroi recognizes the hand of her old master working behind them, and resolves to oppose him once more, regardless of the cost or danger.

The key to the trilogy, its theme, is of caring. If Ser Noris should come to care for any person he would fall under the Goddess's power and lose all. The ambivalence of Serroi and eventually of Ser Noris toward each other is well drawn

and wholly within character. The sub-plots build on the theme as minor characters become major characters. Dom Hern Heslin's perceptions of women change and Serroi's view of men change as they come to know each other. The daughter of a wealthy patron from the first book becomes a major character in the second as her family divides itself over the question of religion after the eldest daughter joins the Followers of the Flame---the sect that is oppressing them. Then there is Rane the meie who will not take a lover after her shield-mate dies of a wasting disease---even though it is several years past. Each deals with the ways in which people love each other.

Less strongly it is a novel of prejudice between men and women, between God/father religions and Goddess/mother faiths, of order confronting the needs of freedom. The Followers of the Flame embody the worst traits of patriarchal religions and social orders as they have existed on our world. The worship of the Maiden represents the best attributes of matriarchal belief systems. The metaphor is cleanly presented and explained without the sloppy stereotyping of lesser writers.

A lesser writer would either abandon thematic weight in favor of plot action or in the name of political consciousness fail to develop a smooth plot. The former is characteristic of female protagonist fanatics, while the latter has been my pet gripe about early feminist science fiction works. Jo Clayton avoids pedantry, blending theme and plot with classic grace as in the second book she leaves Serroi standing upon a precipice both physical and ethical: The price of saving her world from Ser Noris might prove greater than Serroi can bear.

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STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK  
By Vonda McIntyre  
Pocket, 297 pp., \$2.95  
REVIEWED BY ALMA JO WILLIAMS

By now, most of you will have seen the movie and/or read this book, so you all know the basic story line. The movie, perforce, didn't stop for explanations and was very straightforward, i.e., Saavik and David are transferred to survey ship, Grissom, and go down to Genesis to find the life form reading which has been picked up. Enterprise, et al, go back to Earth, Sarek confronts Kirk, asking where Spock's body is, McCoy is found to be the keeper of Spock's soul, Kirk and Co. steal the Enterprise and run back to Genesis only to find the Klingons there, David is killed, Enterprise blown up, (this is the basis of the TV commercial "...the final voyage of the Enterprise."), Kirk etc. and a reborn Spock transport onto the Klingon scout vessel and everyone rides into the sunset for Vulcan.

Ms. McIntyre has fleshed out the story a bit more with her attention to more interplay of the characters. We learn that Carol Marcus and Vance Madison, one of the dead techs from Genesis Project, were lovers and that she felt more loyalty to him than to Jim Kirk, David and Saavik get it together, Sulu was picked to command Excelsior, however ... and we see a bit of Scotty's family life when his nephew is buried. This and more awaits you in the book version, and of course, we'll all await the coming of STAR TREK IV: THE RETURN OF SPOCK'S MEMORY.

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CHEON OF WELTANLAND, BOOK I:  
THE FOUR WISHES  
By Charlotte Stone  
DAW, 205 pp., \$2.95  
REVIEWED BY JANRAE FRANK

This is a light-hearted novel, first in a series, about the adventures of an 18-year-old lesbian swordswoman who has a terrible time finding lovers (among other things). The believably adolescent heroine is wonderfully conceited, self-obsessed, and utterly naive... The witch who raised Cheon, granted her four wishes. Chiefest among those is the wish for Cheon to become Queen of Weltanland. Cheon, hoping to bring it to pass, sets out to make a name for herself by cutting a determined swathe across the continent as a mercenary, fighting invaders, demons and pirates.

The book is full of tongue-in-cheek passages.

"Now we must enter port, and there I will find women for Jujak and the other men who lack women."

"Now we must enter port, and there I will find women for Jujak and the other men who lack women."

"Why did you not say this when we were beside Wotan which is the only port nearby? Now we must row back again." ... "Did you not know of Wotan?"

"I did not," I said, following the way though I was tempted to lie.

"So much then for the great education of which you tell us so frequently," he said, which was an utter falsehood, for I had told them but once, or at most three times, and only then because it was necessary for one reason or another.

It will probably annoy any feminists too rigid to laugh at themselves and appall those readers too conservative to enjoy the lesbian aspects (we mustn't forget that new vocal minority, traditional enemies of feminism now allied with the feminists for the sake of censorship). I found the tone reminiscent of Poul Anderson's AMAZON PLANET, and the story as a whole is every bit as good as the best of the light fantasies of L. Sprague de Camp.

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THE COMPLETE AUTHORIZED GUIDE TO  
DUNE ENCYCLOPEDIA  
Compiled by Dr. Willis E. McNelly  
Berkeley, illustrated, \$9.95  
REVIEWED BY ALMA JO WILLIAMS

This is all the information you ever wanted to know about DUNE and couldn't locate. Frank Herbert has given his imprimatur on this tremendous undertaking in the foreword, and himself appears overwhelmed by this ponderous tome. What more can I add! For Duneophiles and anyone who would like an entertaining month or two of leisurely reading (or a week if speed reading).

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# LETTER FROM ROBERT REGINALD  
Borgo Press  
POB #2845  
San Bernardino, CA 92406  
August 1, 1984

'The DUNE ENCYCLOPEDIA, published recently by Berkley Books, failed to include proper credit lines for three of my contributed articles. Bylines were lacking altogether on "Emperors of the Known Universe" and "Atreides, House, Foundation of," and misrecorded on "Atreides, Minotauros," which was attributed to one Stephen Goldman. I am sure Mr. Goldman is thrilled at the prospect of becoming, in ef-

fect, the 21st pseudonym of R. Reginald. These will be corrected on any future editions.'

#### MINDSPELL

By Kay Nolte Smith  
William Morrow & Co., 1983, \$13.95.

#### REVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

I had read good things about Kay Nolte Smith's earlier novels, *THE WATCHER* (1981) and *CATCHING FIRE* (1982), so I was looking forward to reading *MINDSPELL*.

I was disappointed. Perhaps the earlier titles, which I still haven't read, were better---I hope so, for this one was rather mundane.

A case could be made, in fact, that *MINDSPELL* is mundane rather than science fiction, for the SF content is rather thin. So is the fantasy. But there is enough of both to qualify it as marginally SF/fantasy.

To get specific: the fantasy concerns a witch who was burned in Scotland in 1643 and who put a curse, maybe, on the female members of the family thereafter. The SF, if you want to call it that, concerns genetic engineering but it's in a contemporary setting, so there's nothing very imaginative about it. Linking the two together is Cayla Hayward, who believes she is the direct descendant of the witch (and thus of the curse) and who is also head of a giant drug company that is experimenting with genetic engineering...

Sigh. Back in 1970 I wrote a failed novel about a cursed Scottish family that eventually came to own a giant research laboratory that was experimenting with genetic engineering. And my version of the cliché even had some jokes to liven it up a bit.

Which is more than I can say for *MINDSPELL*, alas.

#### SHADOW OF THE BEAST

By Gerald DiPego  
Signet, June 1984, \$3.50

#### REVIEWED BY PAULETTE MINARE'

Ruth Cassen, professor of anthropology, believes that according to evidence found in Peru, great apes have existed in the New World. *Gigantopithecus* was the largest of the early apes, perhaps from whence our legends of Sasquatch and the Abominable Snowman came.

Ruth is to lead a summer horseback expedition to sight Sasquatch in northwestern Oregon; the tracker is Jack Lillion, an embittered, dangerous man who rides a killer stallion. Among the guests is Linda, a sexy blonde who travels with Dick Barth, pro photographer, who hates women although he uses Linda sexually and cruelly exploits her, expressing his hatred partly by capturing and owning her through photos which he sells to porno magazines. There is the has-been actor Hank Webb, who will not change with the times in movies, mourns the "good old days" and compulsively plays to an "audience" even though it means neglecting his teenage son, Hen Webb.

By planting a spurious track of Big Foot, Jack Lillion causes the expedition to leave the usual horseback routes and takes them into dense forests where their way must be bushwhacked. Because of him two are killed.

Jack has cruelly seduced the shy young cook, Laurie. Next he lures Linda into a night of violent love-making on the forest floor which ends with her tripping the alarms, cameras and strobe lights set up to photograph Big Foot; their nude ruttings are on film and witnessed by the whole party. The one Jack really wants is Ruth Cassen, who spurns him, so Jack leaves Ruth and Hen Webb to die with no guide.

They are saved by Sasquatch whose dark, moist eyes wordlessly communicate peace and love. In return Ruth destroys her photos of him to keep his secret forest community uncontaminated by "civilized" man.

Gerald DiPego's graphic portrayal makes this a most engrossing novel. He brings to us adventure, romance, explicit love scenes, intrigue and murder, all written with a master hand.

#### MANHATTAN GHOST STORY

By T.M. Wright  
TOR, Aug 1984, \$3.95

#### REVIEWED BY PAULETTE MINARE'

This novel by T.M. Wright, author of *CARLISLE STREET* (review-

ed in SFR #48 by myself) and of *STRANGE SEED* (reviewed in SFR #36 by Richard E. Geis) is a bizarre love story between Abner Cray who creates coffee-table photo books, and (unknown to him) already-dead Phyllis Pellaprat, who was murdered by Abner's best friend. Abner has been cursed with becoming an unwilling trespasser, slipping in and out of the seldom-seen dimension of the dead who roam Manhattan, incredibly enough in their earthly bodies, feeling pain, speaking, walking (although stiff-leggedly) and carrying on their former activities. At one point Abner crawls out of a Chevy driven by one of the dead, as he realizes later; on looking back he sees only a derelict junker, one of the many littering the streets of New York.

The main difference between the dead and the living is that the dead are endlessly engaged in repeating certain lifetime acts, very briefly touched upon as "unfinished business." There is the man who must twitch his head in time to the phrase, "Ain't we all doin' a book?" Four teenagers are perpetually hailing a taxi, a small boy repeatedly tries to sell his mongrel puppies and Petersak, the cabbie, is "only doing what I've always done," etc.

Abner asks Phyllis after they have met and become lovers, "Could you stop grinning, Phyllis?" She replies, "I have to grin. I'm coming apart." ... "We all come apart ... the way dolls do and we leave, Abner. We go away."

Abner inadvertently stumbles into a bordello while hunting Phyllis where he repeatedly meets women who are "cleaning themselves." The manager accosts him asking:

"Which one you want? You want Sheila?" ... "Course they're all jett markin' time, you know," ... "She's leavin' tomorrow, early; so you can't have her ... Less of course you like 'em that way... Some guys do ... can't keep the sickies out ... some get through; the live ones get through..."

(PP. 214 & 215)

If you are looking for insight into life after death, don't expect any from this rather aimless novel in which the characters seem to show no growth and gain no enlightenment in regard to their conditions or where they go after leaving this incredible, invisible semblance of life. At the novel's conclusion both the living and the dead appear as disoriented, confused and anxious as they were at the outset.



# LETTERS

# LETTER FROM DAMON KNIGHT  
1645 Horn Lane  
Eugene, OR 97404

'Evidently it was the remark about right-wing s.f. writers, which I could perfectly well have omitted, that stirred up the frogs. I have a feeling that it wasn't even the word "right-wing" that stimulated them (although it did provoke cries of "dirty liberal"), but the word "shallow." Political yahoos and flakes of every description are convinced that they are brilliant logicians (and some of them are); I should have remembered this.

'Summarizing, then:

'1. Greg Benford said that hard s.f. is "somehow the core" of science fiction. I replied that there isn't enough of it to be a core. Illogical. (Non sequitur.) A core can be of any size, and in fact it can be, and many are, absolutely vacant.

'2. Greg said the term "philosophy" is vague. True; and so is the term "hard s.f." (See the remarks about Asimov and Heinlein below.) At one point, in discussing Larry Niven, Greg seems to think I mean "political philosophy." What I really mean, and should have



said, is metaphysics + ethics + a bit of aesthetics: e.g., how did the universe begin, where did we all come from, what are we really like, what is our purpose if any, how should we live?, etc. Science fiction addresses these questions in a way that conventional fiction can't, and there are implicit answers to some of them in almost every science fiction story, even RINGWORLD.

'3. Both Greg and Charles Platt called me picky for pointing out that Cavorite and cannons are equally impossible methods for getting saps to the Moon. They did so, apparently, because they were unable to make the connection between this paragraph and another one farther on, in which I said that it doesn't matter if the assumption is right or not, as long as the story uses it in an interesting way. My point was precisely that it is nitpicking to question whether the basic assumption of a good story is hard or soft. I should have put the paragraphs closer together.

'4. Greg argued that Wells erred about Cavorite because he didn't know any better. First, this requires us to believe that Wells had never heard of the conservation of energy. Second, Wells himself explicitly denied that his works were what we would now call hard s.f. In the preface to his SEVEN SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS, contrasting himself with Verne, he wrote: "But these stories of mine collected here do not pretend to deal with possible things; they are exercises of the imagination in a quite different field. They belong to a class of writing which includes the GOLDEN ASS of Apuleius, the TRUE HISTORIES of Lucian, PETER SCHLEMIL and the story of FRANKENSTEIN. (...) They have to hold the reader to the end by art and illusion and not by proof and argument, and the moment he closes the cover and reflects he wakes up to their impossibility."

'5. Greg suggested that Clarke, Asimov (robotics, psychohistory) and Heinlein, (discorporate Martians, a literal Heaven) have hit the New

York Times best-seller lists because they are hard s.f. writers. Illogical, even in the case of Clarke. (Post hoc, ergo propter hoc.) There are a great many reasons why some books become best-sellers and others don't. A theory that accounts for Clarke and Benford is not much good unless it also explains Robert Silverberg and Anne McCaffrey.

'6. Elton Elliott called me a member of the Evil Empire, and suggested that I am against the L5 moonoggie because I can't bear to think he might escape into space and have fun. False. Nothing would give me more pleasure than for Elton to escape into space.'

((Are we all arguing about degrees of scientific credibility in sf in defining sf, or saying credibility (plausibility) doesn't much matter if the story holds the reader and makes him think?

((I prefer credibility---a few phrases of scientific jargon and some discipline of character and cause-effect will do---as opposed to fantasy, which I think of as escape into a never-was, never-could-be world of fairies, trolls, unicorns, dragons, sorcerers, magic swords, etc. Yes, I know many a sf novel can be translated into fantasy by changing a raygun to a sword or a spell, but a change of furniture does make a big difference. A possible magic-science future (TV is still magic to me) is different from an out-and-out

impossible medieval fantasy. The future or scientific premise is all-important, as when a hero or heroine is space-shipped or time/space-warped to a planet where magic works and the culture is medieval-like complete with dragons and enchanted jewels. I don't like such transparent mixing, but it's at least under the sf roof, barely.

((I think Wells wrote social science fiction; he was an idea tinkerer, an idealist, a believer that mankind could be perfected by man, if only the right social mechanisms could be found and put in place... There are still people around who believe that absurdity.))

# LETTER FROM RONALD R LAMBERT  
2350 Virginia, Troy, MI 48083  
Aug 8, 1984

'You will never get me to admit to hubris. I am too humble for that.

'I do pity Knight for having missed a fundamental philosophical point of a large portion of science fiction literature. All literature is an exploration of human reality and questions relating to good and evil can be explored in science fiction perhaps better than in any other genre. To dismiss such explorations as philosophically shallow is to miss out on an essential part of the human dialogue.

'I avoided defining good and evil in my previous letter in hope that no perception of religious connotations would confuse the issue, but you saw religious connotations anyway, so perhaps I should define what I mean.

'Good and evil each represent discrete systems of behavior, containing both action and motive. Some psychologists are beginning to tumble to this, because they have been faced with overwhelming evidence that people frequently do things that they know to be evil



AS THE DAYS GREW SHORTER  
MORALE DETERIORATED BADLY.



simply because they choose to. People choose to cast away civilized restraint and concern for consequences, choose to disregard the humanity of others, choose to not empathize with their victims, choose to not care about anything except their ruthless pursuit of desire.

'Here is where the dividing line comes between liberals and the rest of us. Liberals will deny or minimize to the point of invisibility the free choice part of it. If, for example, a high school student rapes and murders his teacher, liberals will say the student's behavior was a result of living in a broken home, poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination and the social policies of the president. The rest of us know that the student acted as he did because he chose to. Indeed, he chose to do evil. The idea that social conditions cause crimes is refuted by the fact that the vast majority of people who live under the same conditions do not commit crimes. Logically, as long as there were one person anywhere, anytime, who did not behave evilly no matter what the circumstances of his life, that would be enough to prove that evil has no reasonable cause outside of itself.

'While this may be disturbing, the converse is encouraging. If evil exists as a discrete system in human behavior, then so also does good exist. People can do good motivated by the knowledge that it is good. This is more than mere altruism. It is an anti-entropic spirit in humanity that advances civilization and the reign of decency against the forces of barbarism and wantonness. The only hope for the future of humanity is that good will win out.

'I understand your wariness about religious connotations being involved in discussions of good and evil. But contrary to what you appear to be assuming, religion did not create the concepts of good and evil. Good and evil exist as observable phenomena in the real world, as modes of human behavior, and all the world's religions represent attempts to explain and deal with these phenomena. Some religions have created the concept of sin, but that is only an attempt to explain evil in terms of rebellion against divine authority. Many religions do not have the concept of sin. But there is no language spoken on Earth that does not have a word for evil. You may not feel that religion has any value; but good and evil exist nonetheless.

'There is nothing more fundamental to human reality than the matter of good and evil, therefore

it is a legitimate concern of literature, and one we should not avoid because we fear religious connotations nor dismiss as "philosophically shallow."

((Okay, but at what age does evil become a matter of choice? Ten years old? How about five? Does a two-year-old choose to do evil? An infant?

((You make the choosing to do evil seem an extremely rational process. But extreme emotion is the trigger---or the vehicle---for evil 90% of the time (as I guess). And I believe what you call evil is the result of subconscious emotional pressures. Evil is a catch-all word, an oversimplification. The forces which produce evil are so myriad and deeply bedded, probably over long periods of time, that it is impossible to describe them and even understand them except piecemeal and in overly generalized ways.

((The student who rapes and murders his teacher is the result of specific, individual, personal emotional trauma over years as well (I believe) as probably some "bad" genes.

((You're right in deriding bleeding heart Liberal dogma which blames broken homes, poverty, unemployment, discrimination for crime or evil. Hell, I come from a low-income broken home. My dad was an alcoholic who frequently beat my mother. He was sometimes unemployed--fired. I have been discriminated against because I am handicapped. For a period my mother was a "loose woman" by the morality of that time. So I do not believe much in "environmental" factors. I have written a lot of sex novels which I hope have made masturbation a more pleasurable experience for a lot of people. Does that make me evil? Were those novels evil? To a lot of people the answer is yes. I say no.

((We haven't yet discussed the parameters of evil: which crimes are evil, and which are acts in current cultural/societal disfavor? Is abortion evil? Is prostitution evil? Is smoking for 40 years, developing lung cancer, and using up thousands of dollars of medical time and material, evil?

((It do get complicated.))

# LETTER FROM JOHN BRUNNER  
The House, Palmer St.,  
S. Petherton, Somerset  
England TA13 5DB  
Hiroshima Day 1984

'There are scores of items I'd like to discuss, including Greg Ben-



ford's view of British/US science fiction, but I have such a heap of correspondence to deal with today, I shall have to restrain myself.

'I can, though, correct Ian Co-vell on one point concerning UK car registrations; things are not as bad as he makes out! Certain letters have never been used (specifically I and O to avoid confusion with 1 and 0 -- but this hasn't prevented people from exploiting the system. Not long ago someone spotted, and indeed published in THE OBSERVER, a picture of a Renault Fuego with the number 50 SEXY -- "So sexy!"

'And Charles Platt was being snide, not for the first time, in his comment about Casabordinio Lido. Our friends there don't want to "keep the place for themselves!" The point is that it's a family-type resort, mercifully free of shops selling overpriced souvenirs and giant tour-buses disgorging the sort of visitors who constantly complain that they can't get the same food as at home. Much of the Adriatic coast is like that nowadays; Casabordinio Lido is a rare oasis, and owing to its situation will very probably remain so for a good while yet. Of course, maybe Charles likes to find everything the same wherever he goes. Me, when I'm abroad, I prefer to find out how other countries differ from mine...'

((I am often appalled at the differences between peoples in different cities, states, regions in this country. In fact, the differences between the people on this city block has me in constant astonished bemusement. I don't think I could handle a different country.))

# LETTER FROM GENE WOLFE  
Box 69,  
Barrington, IL 60010  
8-11-84

'Your comment on Lambert's letter recalls Dr. Johnson's answer when he was asked what books a boy should read: "Why, let him read any books he will read, sir, and he'll find himself better ones by and by." That was 200 years ago--when are we going to learn it?'

((We have, Gene; they haven't.))

# LETTER FROM EDWARD E. ROM  
POB # 685  
Mankato, MN 56002  
Aug 27, 1984

'I liked Greg Benford's article about the New Wave and British SF as opposed to American SF. My own observation is that British and European SF tends more to social commentary than does the American version, and quite often has what appears to the American reader (such as myself) a leftist tinge. This, I think, is the reason that a lot of this stuff does not sell well in America. Most Americans do not, I think, have the same sort of social consciousness that Europeans do. We're closer to the frontier.'

((Right. In fact, we are the frontier if you think of our space program and the American Itch to get Out There and exploit the galaxy. Until that possibility (space flight for greedy people) is expunged or killed by failures, we will not go easily into a drab, boring future of terrestrial affairs.))

# LETTER FROM CHRISTOPHER PRIEST  
1 Orygia House, 6 Lower Rd  
Harrow, Middlesex HA2 0DA  
England  
Aug 8, 1984

'Darrell Schweitzer mentions Lisa Tuttle as one of his former fanzine "participants" who is now too "big-time" to write for him. "The pro writer who still cares about fanzines is a member of a vanishing breed." Lisa regularly reads, contributes to and publishes fanzines. This year, in fact, she has probably published more fanzines than Schweitzer has in the last five years. (Come to that, so has her husband.)'

((Glad to hear Lisa is so active. But I'm not aware of her activity. Am I missing her zines?))

# LETTER FROM JANET FOX  
519 Ellinwood  
Osage City, KS 66523  
August 8, 1984

'I hate to disagree with Darrell Schweitzer (Hey, why did I say that? I hear it's gotten so popular that it's an Olympic sport) but I found his comments at the end of his interview and in a letter rather contradictory. He talked about the waning of small press because of expanding pro markets for short fantasy fiction. But as I guess everybody knows, IMAGO is dead and FANTASTIC unlikely to be resurrected in my lifetime. I don't really expect Darrell to be a fortuneteller, but I don't know how he can talk about the waning of the small press.

'In his letter he decries those "irrational" types who are not into the latest technology such as computers. Computers, word processors, copiers ... I wonder what sort of impact these could have on the growth of small press? (Why do I keep asking these rhetorical questions? ... Oh, yeah, so I can answer them.) With technology in its present state, any idiot can have his own zine. And I oughta know; I've got one going myself.

'God ... and I love it when you say "this is a man's picture" as if us women only go to movies about tatting or needlepoint.'

((Ah, yes. Trashing Darrell may someday bring a gold medal to the best of them.

((With the oncoming demise of AMAZING (just a feeling!) I would think a good amateur fiction zine could establish a small, loyal following. An attempt to make a profit, though...The costs of a "pro" package--offset, book paper, typesetting, bookstore distribution, etc.--make it too expensive and time consuming.

((Well, a "man's" picture is one (in my view) in which there are no women or in which the women are almost invisible, and the subject matter is "masculine". And a "woman's" picture is one in which the women are dominant and their interpersonal relationships are what the picture is built around.))



# LETTER FROM MIKE GLICKSONH  
508 Windemere Ave  
Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6  
Canada  
Aug 22, 1984

'I was amused by Schweitzer's comments about mimeography. While it's true that PROCRUSTINATION is a worthy nominee for the worst-mimeographed fanzine of all time that is scarcely a failing in the medium itself. As my own XENIUM shows, it's quite simple to produce an attractive fanzine with a properly-used mimeo machine. (I believe the former Richard Geis would be aware of this.) Darrell's fanzines were ugly and sloppy because he had no concept of how to design a magazine and couldn't get anywhere near the capabilities of the process from the machine he was using. It always amazed me that people like Zelazny agreed to be published in such an abysmally-produced fanzine. (I too have seen old copies of CRAS priced at \$15 because of the writers within them; happily for fanzine fans, I've never heard of anyone stupid enough to actually pay those prices.)

'Many thanks for SFR; it continues to be the best magazine devoted to science fiction that I see and I enjoy each issue.'

((The 'former Richard Geis'? I suppose you are referring to all them issues of PSYCHOTIC and SFR I produced on the old (now severely out of whack) Gestetner 466. And, yes, I'm aware of it. Now, however, I'd put my \$3600 into a good copier. (The Gestetner 466 didn't cost \$3600, it cost around \$1299, but that would be \$3600 in today's money.)

((I note your specific and restricted compliment in re SFR; very soon now, Mike, SFR will qualify...it might even qualify... as a pure-as-the-driven-non-commercial-amateur-snow fanzine again. \*Faunch...drool...slurp!\*))

# CARD FROM ROBERT BLOCH  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
August 6, 1984

'As usual, I find your notions on the state of the economy very thought-provoking, though I doubt if I could adapt your proposed life-style as a personal solution. Having lived through one depression, I'm not ecstatic about facing another -- but agree with you that it is coming, and this time will be accompanied by dangers which the last one didn't expose us to, in the form of rampant violence. At the height of the Great Depression

of the '30s, one could walk down the street -- almost any street in any city at any hour -- in safety. Today, in the "Good Times" -- but I needn't say more. Just wait until next year. I write more in sadness than in anger, and I'm saddest of all at the neglect your warnings will receive!'

((Yes. For instance, in the mid-30's my cousin and I used to, on Halloween, walk for miles with shopping bags, going from house to house, "Trick or Treat!" and come home loaded to the gunwales with candy, fruit, nuts, even cake. We were alone. No parents escorting us, guarding us. Virtually every house gave gifts to the hundreds of kids who were out. There was no poisoning, no needles in fruit, or any danger.

((In fact, there was a day or two before Halloween dedicated to "tricks"---soaping windows, pranks of various kinds. All done and suffered in good humor.

((Now Halloween is almost dead, with few kids out, herded by anxious parents, going to fewer houses. Sad.

((Also, I think it's sad that every year fewer and fewer houses seem to have Christmas decorations, trees, lights. The old customs and rituals are almost dead.))

# LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER  
113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, PA  
19087. Aug 22, 1984

'First let me say that it should be obvious to the astute that parts of Wilgus's interview with me were done some time ago, from the references to Hank Stine being editor of Starblaze.

'All references to my celebrated six-book contract and to forthcoming Starblaze titles are also obsolete. It seems I am no longer a Starblaze/Donning author at all. Kay Reynolds, the new editor, has mysteriously been unable to come to the phone since about March, as part of the new Donning policy of never communicating with the authors under any circumstances. But I found out from other sources much of what was going on, and so wasn't too surprised when I called up Donning to order more copies of my books and was told that both titles had been remaindered. I was disappointed, because I had asked to be allowed to buy the remainders. In fact, the contract said I was to receive a three-month advance notice of discontinuation of publication, and I was to have a sixty-day option on the remainders, but then Donning contracts have always been more honored in the breach.

'Throughout all this, the company has otherwise maintained absolute silence. Reynolds, who must be worked to the bone, has never yet found an instant's free time to come to the phone or return a call, the poor dear. I assume they don't want to publish any more books by me, and in any case, I don't want anything further to do with them.

'I am making provisions for some of the titles, but this presumably means that my anthology, ILL-MET BY MOONLIGHT, is dead. I am not optimistic at its chances of finding a new publisher. It's a shame, because it was a good book, which would have helped several writers launch their careers. It was to be, in essence, a WHISPERS anthology of everyone else -- a collection of stories from the small press magazines, all of high professional quality, no excuses made. WHISPERS, because of its Doubleday series, was under-represented in proportion to its merit (i.e., most of the good stories have already been anthologized by Stuart Schiff) but there was to be some material from it, and a lot from WEIRDOBOOK, FANTASY TALES, MYRDDIN, FANTASY CROSSROADS, etc. etc. Authors included well-known professionals like H. Warner Munn (who gave me permission shortly before he died), Karl Wagner, L. Sprague de Camp and many others, plus some new and little-known writers. Small press magazines were the dominant part of the fantasy-short-story market in the last decade; the idea was to bring all this very interesting and important material in front of a larger audience.

'Donning included the book in an option clause in 1979 and farted around ever after. I am sorry for the authors, particularly the newer & little-known ones, whose hopes were raised only to be dashed, but it isn't my fault. Donning just never got around to doing the book. Authors are asked to stick pins in images of Donning's owner, Robert Friedman.

((What authors never appreciate are the problems of the publisher...the cash flow, the sales charts, the overhead... And what one editor does is often what another editor undoes. Hank Stine had his chance and his editorial direction, his decisions, didn't pan out as well as he and his boss hoped (I presume). That is the way of the publishing world. Editors come and editors go, and sometimes authors go with them.

((I don't believe publishers spend good money in order to lose it; there probably are very good reasons why Donning acted as it did, most likely some beyond its control.))

FU MANCHU IN THE  
WHITE HOUSE



'But on a more practical level, I would like to hear from anyone who has seen either of my titles (WE ARE ALL LEGENDS and THE SHATTERED GODDESS) remaindered. I haven't seen them and may need someone to buy some for me. I would also like to know, because the information might become useful, what other Donning titles have been seen remaindered. Due to the Donning policy of silence, rumors abound. One is that they've remaindered or discontinued virtually their entire SF line. I don't know if this is true or not.

'Actually, being dumped by Donning is an undisguised blessing for me. The company was addicted to the light-under-a-bushel philosophy of publishing. They'd produce good books in handsome editions, then hide them.

'I owe a debt of gratitude to Hank Stine, who took the great risk of buying WE ARE ALL LEGENDS when some other publishers refused to even read it. The aggravation of Donning has been worth it, because this book was too unconventional to be brought into existence any other way. But since then, things have not worked out, and I'm glad to be away from it all. I shall now have my agent (Richard Curtis) seek a real publisher for these and other titles. Wish me luck.

'Another piece of publishing news. You no doubt have read something about Steven Spielberg's AMAZING STORIES TV show, and have probably seen newspaper accounts referring to AMAZING as something Spielberg "owns the rights to." This has created some furor, but the truth is that the TV show only rented the title (see the current LOCUS on this), and the misunderstanding was caused by some idiot reporter failing to understand what he was told. (In my experience being interviewed by newspapers, reporters fail to understand most of what they are told. You have to keep it very simple.) But the garbled version went out over the wire services.

'What impressed me was the way the story appeared in newspapers all over the country with only minor shifts to greater or lesser degrees of inaccuracy. All of them

got it from the same source and none of them bothered to check. It demonstrates an awesome potential for disinformation, doesn't it? Some minor matter about AMAZING hardly counts, but consider the political possibilities. I am sure many people already have. What need to censor anything under the circumstances? Just tell 'em what you want, and nobody will bother to check.

'Who was it that said, "If you ever chance to witness a catastrophe, you'll never recognize it in the morning papers?"

'Greg Benford's article made me stop and think, particularly since it appears in conjunction with my review of HELLICONIA SUMMER and Spinrad's column on the subject in LOCUS.

'He may be right. Maybe British and American SF are drawing apart, to the detriment of both. I believe the New Wave really did do serious commercial damage to British SF, particularly in this country, but I would hope that editors and critics could see beyond that. (Yet Spinrad quotes an American editor as saying that British SF no longer sells.) And one gets the impression from FOUNDATION that for British critics, a writer who is both American and successful has committed two unforgivable lapses of etiquette.)

'Maybe the reason that the Helliconia series isn't getting such wild adulation in this country is that it is too British for an American audience. I have noticed that other British writers seem to be vanishing from American book stores. There are Ian Watson books (CHERKOV'S JOURNEY for instance) which, to my knowledge, have had no American editions. Keith Roberts and Christopher Priest seem to be out of print in this country. Only the very biggest names -- Aldiss, Clarke, Brunner, White -- seem to remain in print. This may be because the books really don't sell. It may be that the relatively emotionless tone of much British SF alienates American readers, for cultural reasons or whatever. Or it may be (also) that American audiences are just too narrow to care for anything outside of their own viewpoints.

'In a few cases, the writer in question has drifted far away from what the audiences want to read. J.G. Ballard lost his audience with his gibberish "condensed novels" (which were collected into the non-book LOVE & NAPALM, EXPORT USA) and then he wrote a series of non-SF novels (HIGH RISE, etc.), and when he finally returned to coherent SF (THE UNLIMITED DREAM COMPANY, LOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT, etc.) these books

were either invisible in the US, or not published at all. I find that the few readers who remember Ballard (often with fondness for his early short stories) regard him as a figure out of the remote past rather than someone who is still active. It may be a sign of the growing difference between the two readerships that Ballard remains an on-going concern in Britain, but is virtually forgotten here.

'The short-story market is fortunately much better off. We still see a satisfying number of British writers in F&SF. As for my own influence on AMAZING, I am very much in favor of foreign SF of all sorts. I even wrote an editorial on the subject and it was I who brought Keith Roberts' "Kitemaster" (from INTERZONE) to George's attention, causing it's first American publication. We have managed to publish a number of non-American authors (including one Chinese), the Britons being, among others, Tanith Lee, Keith Roberts and a very talented newcomer named Tina Rath. AMAZING gets very few letters (less than SFR does) but as far as I can tell all these have been well received.

'It think the problem is more one of brand names than nationalities. American book buyers go for brand names. They will read all the Marion Zimmer Bradley or Robert Heinlein, or whoever, but completely ignore the unknowns. Any foreigner is a defacto unknown until proven otherwise. Now a majority of SF readers don't read the magazines, but still a significant portion of them do, at least occasionally. Therefore, British and other foreign writers would be well advised to submit more stories to American magazines and anthologies so as to make their names more familiar to the audience. I can't speak for anyone else, but the magazines I've been involved in have always been very receptive to non-Americans, even ones making their first sales.'

((I'm somewhat amazed, too, that a few good reviews by \*cough-cough\* respected and influential reviewers can make a difference...in sf, anyway. A review can trigger a fan reader to buy a given new novel by an unknown and if the novel is as good as the reviewer has said, the word-of-mouth chain reaction begins and sales make the editor and publisher want to buy another book by that author---and at a higher advance, probably. Reviewers do have influence---some do---in this small world we live in.))



# LETTER FROM RICHARD S. MCENROE  
NY "Gully J" Island Bay Marina,  
Island, Foot of Jamaica Avenue  
Island Park, NY 11558  
Sept, 1984

'So, people are yelling at Charles Platt again, over his stand on "interactive" fiction and gaming, hey? Well, that's what you're paying him for, and based on my admittedly brief and occasional acquaintance with the man, I think he's enjoying it more than he lets on.

'Epaterizing the bourgeois is a popular sport among a certain class of intelligent Englishpersonry; I think the major difference between Charles and most players of same is that it still matters to him which shit he kicks into whose fans. This is actually an attitude at odds with the spirit of the sport; the whole point of epaterizing the bourgeois is to denigrate and trivialize all the values and attitudes addressed in the course of the game, thus stripping them of any possible emotional or intellectual importance to the player. To inflict epaterization (why, yes, I have been reading Al Haig's book) and to hope thereby to effect a change in those attitudes is to use a modest tool for a purpose it was not designed to fulfill, and to court disappointment. Don't get your hopes up, Charles, the Steve Perries of the world will always be with us. In fact, their numbers will probably increase as radiation exposure from the decaying ozone layer and videogame screens results in rising genetic deformation.

'For my part, I was offered a chance to write interactive novels and passed it by. Why? Because I'm a selfish, arrogant bastard when it comes to my work. The one thing I learned when I was bashing out Buck Rogers novels from Niven & Pournelle outlines back at Ace is

that I like jobs that are complete jobs -- that is, when I've put in the sweat and effort of doing the work, I can look back and see a concrete result for my labors -- in this case, a book, a unique book, that no one else could have written the way I wrote it, for good or ill. "Interactive" novels don't let you do that, because you have to leave room for the reader's participation.

'Come to that, "interactive" novels don't. Interact, that is. Why not? Because there is no involvement on the part of the reader in the shaping of the story. All he can do (or she can do, whatever) is choose from among the plot options the writer has provided. The same applies to most "interactive" computer games. The choices of outcome are still limited to those the writer provides: It makes no difference at all WHICH reader is making the selections. So what you have with the current "interactive" craze is a gelded waste of good trees, where the writer is denied the opportunity to put the stamp of his own identity on the finished product, because there is no finished product (and also not incidentally, denied the chance to develop a marketable identity that might elevate his value above that of his fellow pieceworkers), and where the reader is denied exposure to both a variety of auctorial identities and the chance to participate in the auctorial process, no matter how the damn things are labelled.

'Actually, interactive games and books, truly interactive, have been on the market for many years, allowing the reader to shape the materials the publisher provides to his own desire. They're called "notebooks," and they provide both high-quality paper and clearly demarcated spaces for the buyer to enter his own contributions to the story on every page. There is even a neat little red line on the left-hand side of the page that, used wisely, allows the interacting reader to produce a finished, semi-justified manuscript. But you better believe the "interactive" publishers aren't going to push these systems into the dedicated marketplace anytime soon.

'With the coming fruition of the promising Japanese experimentation in Fifth Generation computer design, the possibility exists that truly interactive games will be produced by the 1990s. I'm not thrilled by the prospect of the competition for the buyer's dollar, but I'd much rather knock heads with an honest competitor than a shabby, demeaning hype such as the current "Interactive" scam.

'By the way, Charles, loved yer computer book. It didn't take; working with your WP system on your Ohio Scientific convinced me to buy one, and Lou Aronica's opinion of my manuscript appearance clinched the deal. I'm probably going to go with an Apple IIc, precisely because its lack of expandability will tend not to lure me down the primrose path to hacker perdition (and besides, I can always buy a IIe later ...).

((Ile or not Ile, that is the question!))

# LETTER FROM JANRAE FRANK  
8033 Sunset Blvd., #320  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
August 1, 1984

'Piers Anthony came across as remarkably naive when he suggested that you should have answered that person asking for how to be a writer and addresses of professionals. Something that I noticed when I worked as a publicist cum editorial assistant at Donning was that an amazing number of people think that they can become rich and successful writers if they just know the right people -- it is sort of the literary equivalent of the 30s Hollywood where every young kid thought they could be "discovered" in the corner drugstore and become a success without paying their dues. The one that made it by and large knew where to go to learn their trade ... or they quickly found out where to go ... and then they worked at it.

'Going to the library for books on writing is just plain good common sense. The people who haven't had the common sense to do that don't deserve handouts from professionals. Further these people seem to be trying for a free ride and in my experience when you try to explain to them that there is no free ride they get belligerent and abusive. They don't even say "thank you" for the referral to WRITER'S MARKET, WRITER'S DIGEST, SF GHRONICLE, etc., just "gimmie gimmie." If they were writing instead of trying to make connections they would get a lot better.'

((Sometimes, to a degree, it is who you know and not what you know. An awful lot of writers and actors have gotten a chance, a part or a story or a first novel published---through "pull" or as a favor to a nice guy or gal....Mothethell.

((But most writers and actors are successful---often after years

of rejections---because their talent is finally noticed and given a chance, or because their talent has been honed and disciplined in those years till now it is truly professional and worthy.

((Editors and reviewers are almost always eager to discover a fine new talent. There's so much JUNK being published, that anything alive, new, different, skilled is leaped upon with loud cries of joy.

((Can you imagine---of course, you know!---what it's like to read mss. day after day with the same old plots, situations, characters? Professional fiction editors have my total sympathy...and apologies: I've imposed a lot of publishable junk on them (and on agents) which they had to read. The trouble is, there are hundreds (maybe thousands) of other writers submitting publishable stuff, too, which just doesn't have that spark, that differentness, to make a sale.

((Of course, once you'd made a Name, and have a following, then you can get all your publishable junk in print, and get paid big bucks for it. That's what pisses me!))

# LETTER FROM KARL EDD  
Box #9007, Denver, CO 80209  
September, 1984

'Re Jerry Pournelle's letter of May first in Issue #52, about my review (rather than critique -- and I do know the difference) of Kaplan's WIZARDS OF ARMAGEDDON:

'1. Has Kaplan advised you the book is a series of parodies? Or is this your opinion? Since it's his book, not mine, have you also written him? If so, what did he say?

'2. In either event was the book presented to the reading public as a parody or as a book of serious intent? (I assume you have checked libraries that use the Dewey Decimal System or Library of Congress System to see what classification trained librarians have given the book. My wife happens to be a skilled and responsible reference librarian at the Denver Public Library.)

'3. No, Mister Judge, I didn't say, "Let's rob the bank." I only said, "Let's conduct a thought experiment involving guns, our need for money and bankers' fear for their lives. ---What's that, Judge? You say I'm splitting hairs and how many angels can dance on the point of a pin?" So you're saying the guy didn't propose a Dooomsday Machine, only the idea of such a machine --- like in Beckett, the King

didn't want him killed, he just didn't mind if he was killed, huh? What Jesuit school did you go to?

'You suggest a reviewer that knows a little about this book. I suggest yourself. I'd say you know as little about it as one can. Etc. Right back at you, oh, great one!'

VERY WELL, BUT  
REMEMBER, IT WAS  
YOUR IDEA



# LETTER FROM JOHN SHIRLEY  
267 Grove St, #2R  
Jersey City, NJ 07302  
Oct. 1984

'A friend recently returned from the WorldCon and told me that several people there had asked about me, and that he heard, "What-ever happened to John Shirley?" At least once. Hiding my astonishment, I promised him I'd write to SFx to let the sigh-fick people know what's happening with me, acting on the admittedly slender possibility that someone out there might give a frog's fart about it.

'I've signed a contract to do three books for Bluejay Books, my first hardcovers. The first one is already overdue. But I'm breaking precedent and writing this one carefully, and Jim Frenkel will get it before Christmas for publication in the spring. It's the first book of any significance by yours truly. It will probably be titled ECLIPSE. It's a trilogy having to do with political and social trends in the near future. It concerns a non-nuclear world war (well, mostly non-nukes), a resurgence of classic fascism, guerrilla warfare on earth and on a space colony.

'I've been a year writing trashy action novels under a pseudonym, two pseudonyms actually. I wrote thirteen books. Actually I took only two weeks per book -- a rigid schedule of 15 pages a day for a 210-page book, finished in two weeks -- and would use the rest of the month for research on the

novels for the Bluejay Books and work on ECLIPSE. Great heaps of research...I had to write the trash novels to get out from under debt and to take care of my twin boys who are now two years old and doing well with their Mom in France. I'm separated from their Mom, and living in New Jersey (yes, I admit it! I have a whole spiel for Manhattanites about why it's not so bad to live in New Jersey because I'm just across the river and can be in the city in ten minutes and have a nice apartment for a reasonable price, but they sneer anyway).

'One of the series I wrote, Number 2 through 6, is Dell's TRAVELER series, which is inspired by ROAD WARRIOR and which is sort of SF. Pulp SF. I managed to work some Pasoliniesque imagery, some Edgar Rice Burroughs meets William Burroughs and learns they are related after all, into it...Personally, I think my whipped-out pulp swill is better than Mike Moorcock's whipped-out pulp swill.

'I've been recording for Sarrtoris Records, and there's a deal with Epic cooking but it may well char in the oven. I'm performing in NYC now and then. One of the characters in ECLIPSE is a rock musician and some of that world comes through in the weave pattern of the narrative.

'The only short SF I've got coming out is a collaboration with Bruce Sterling due to appear in INTERZONE. The story is called "The Unfolding."

'I write comedy part time too, for a new HBO show which is not yet in its final stages of production. I've sold a movie script to an independent movie production company. It's a sort of futuristic FLASHDANCE with a budget of only \$8 million. I'm collaborating on a script with underground film-maker Beth B (who did VORTEX with Lydia Lunch, and the "The Dominatrix Sleeps Tonight" video). Michael Pare, I forget where the accent on his name goes, and Karen Allen are starting their own production company and seem interested in my film script WOLFSTAR, which is SF with a rocknroll flavor. But we haven't signed a contract yet.

'I don't want to tell anyone what the other male action book series I did is, but if you're a reader of action series, here's a hint: It's the most violent one going, and the best-written. As for its being the best-written, that isn't saying much.

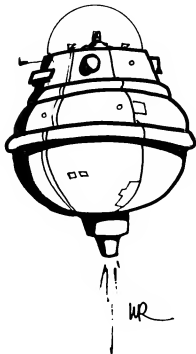
'I take voice lessons, I work out at a club, I jog, I've joined

a gun club (but I'm not voting for Reagan so don't jump to conclusions), and I take no drugs. I've just given up drinking. That was even tougher than giving up drugs.

'The book, the book is growing into something fierce and elegant, cell by cell.

'I'm going to rejoin the SFMA. Do I hear groans out there? Tough. Mostly I'm joining so I can vote for William Gibson's novel NEUROMANCER (an Ace Special), for the Nebula. Not only is it the best SF novel to come along in several years, it's the best first novel in the field in at least a decade. It's what I was preaching for a few years back: excitement, adventure, but always coupled with top-drawer writing and substance. I mean, the guy is an incredibly scrupulous, exquisitely musical stylist. I mean, he is saying something meaningful. I mean, the characterization is crisp and sweet and satisfying as a bite into an autumn apple. I mean dam I envy him.

'I'll never write another pulp book; I'm writing ECLIPSE under my own name. I'm 31 years old. I'm John Shirley, 267 Grove St, #2R, Jersey City, NJ, 07302.'



closet isolationists to a degree, and let the rest of the world take care of itself. We may have to pull our army out of Europe and that other 40,000 men out of Korea. And close a lot of bases.

The 300 or more billion dollar deficit of 1985 will force a lot of changes.

If Reagan is re-elected, I see now, he'll be immobilized by his scrooge image and his desire to keep spending on the military. The 1986 congressional elections would result in a wholesale slaughter of Republicans, and the control of the Senate by the demos.

No matter how I look at it, no matter who is elected, I see disaster and social crisis. And I see utterly no statesmanship or guts in either leader.

There are young, tough, intelligent, libertarian/freedom oriented Republicans in the wings, waiting to take over, willing to make tough decisions. But they'll have to wait four years if Reagan wins, and for that reason I hope Reagan loses.

I'm not aware of anyone in the Democratic ranks who has much guts. Gary Hart is a pretentious fraud. Cuomo is a demagogue who would say anything to win a vote-like Mondale.

George Bush is old-line establishment, a Big-Money tool.

So I'm going to watch the economic indices fall every week, and wonder if the approaching recession will surface soon enough to put the knife into Reagan's re-election campaign.

If Mondale clobbers Reagan again in the second debate, the election might be extremely close, with Mondale winning in the last few days as massive swings occur in voters' minds.



**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #52** "In the Wave's Wake" by Gregory Benford; Interviews with Darrell Schweitzer and Julian May; "Clarion Call" by Avram Davidson. Cover by B. Foster. Commentary by Geis, Elliott, Benford.

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**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45** Interview with Keith Laumer; "Pulp!" by Algis Budrys; Interview with Terry Carr; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; "Raising Hackles" by Elton T. Elliott.

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