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INTERVIEW L. NEIL SMITH

ALEXIS GILLILAND DAMON KNIGHT

HANNAH SHAPERO DARRELL SCHWEITZER

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BRAD FOSTER



RICHARD GEIS

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RICHARD E. GEIS

A PERSONAL JOURNAL

I'm going to try to do something I've wanted to do for a long time---write a totally honest journal to myself, which I will share with you.

This means I'll have to grit my teeth a lot as I'm writing this new REG, and it means you'll be somewhat aghast as you read what I'll be writing.

Necessarily, there are a few personal areas which will be off-limits. But damned few.

Understand, I'm going to be writing REG for the record, for myself ten to fifteen years from now, with personal notes of information, reminders, confessions, guilts, joys, shames.

There will be constant predictions, as a constant test of my version of reality, and hopefully some learning from these tests.

There will be prejudice, naked rage, lust... Worries, fears, hopes.

I know very honest personal journals have been written before, but none in this public way that I know of.

If you'd like to read a few issues, they will cost you \$1.00 per issue.

See page 59 for further details.



ALIEN THOUGHTS

RICHARD E. GEIS

THE FUTURE IS AS FUTURE DOES...

11-1-84 Plans change. Expectations change...but as of now these are the plans I have for SFR over the next two years.

As of now, SFR #61 (November, 1986) will be the final issue of the magazine in its present incarnation.

At that point I'll decide whether to change its format, schedule, size...or whether to change to a personalzine, or a half-and-half zine...

So renewals of subscriptions will be limited to [this issue] 7 issues.

And next issue, the maximum renewal will be six issues...and so on until at issue #60, only a next-issue subscription will be available.

[There are, now, a few over-61 subscriptions on the books, but that problem---if it is a problem at #61-time---will not be major. We'll work something out. Most likely it will be an offer to use up the SFR subs in my now-projected personalzine (or on an issue-by-issue continued publishing of SFR)]

Why the phasing out of SFR? I'm basically tired of it. And I'm very tired of hassling with printers over lousy printing, lousy magazine handling in the shop...and I'm getting exquisitely tired of the arcane and intricate rules and regulations the post office bureaucracy has developed and imposed on mailers over the past fifty years, to the point that their book of rules and regulations is now thicker and more wordy than the Bible, and infinitely more difficult to read and understand. For the post office, like the IRS, simplicity is the enemy, the public is the enemy and its small, non-computerized mailers are the enemy.

After SFR #61, anything I publish will go first class, period.

I will be through with sorting by state, by sectional sorting center, by city, by section of city, and finished with bundling and sacking and mailing statements and zones and stickers and this and that....

Eight more issues (counting this one)....

I see light at the end of the vagina...er...tunnel. [I'll be a born-again amateur publisher!]

I DON'T SEND CARDS...

But I enjoy receiving them. They are tokens of love and respect and admiration, I hope, and this year Paulette and I received whole lot more than ever before from friends in fandom and prodrom, from subscribers... And we say thank you for all these Christmas cards and the good wishes in letters and on subscription renewals.

Each year I intend to wish everyone a happy holiday season, and like as not I forget to add those sentiments when I'm pasting up the November issue in early October.

So, with the aid of your time machine, go back now and enjoy Christmas all over again and know that we wish you all the best that Santa and 1985 can bring.

HAS ANYONE EVER PUBLISHED A FANZINE TITLED THE RIM GREASER? I GOT DIRTS ON IT FOR 1986-7. Thanks to Paulette for thinking of it. She's developing a fine fannish mind.

I ALSO NEED THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE FAN WHO PUBLISHED RECENTLY A LISTING OF ALL THE AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATIONS CURRENTLY ALIVE IN THE SF, FANTASY, LIBERTARIAN, COUNTER-CULTURE AREAS OF INDIVIDUAL PUBLISHING. THANKS. AH 'PRECATE IT.

In 1921 the state of Oregon legislature passed a law giving police officers the power to command citizens to help them in a situation of

civil unrest or crisis. They were afraid of socialist revolution at that time, believe it or not.

Last week a small group of activists sat down in a road to prevent a logging company from cutting down some special trees or from wreaking havoc in a primeval forest...something like that. The Sheriff on the scene ordered two news media photographers and another man who was present to help drag the protestors out of the way. The three men refused [one because of back trouble, the other two because they were newpeople on assignment. All did not believe the Sheriff had the authority to impress them into his force.

Now they have been indicted for refusal to obey the law, a law even the county district attorney hadn't known existed.

It will be appealed by the ACLU and probably declared unconstitutional. It had never been used or tested in court before.

Aren't legislatures wonderful?

And the Portland City Council, invincible in its "response" to a few neighborhood crybabies who object to prostitutes standing on major arterial streetcorners and men stopping to talk/pick-them-up (but say nary a word about drunks shouting and fighting around the neighborhood taverns, and driving away drunk) has passed a clearly unconstitutional series of ordinances aimed at preventing "pickup" activities. Thou shalt not now stop and talk to people on the sidewalk, nor circle the block, nor call out from your car.

"Unenforceable" says the public defenders and private defense attorneys. "Unconstitutional" says the Portland ACLU.

But the Council is mindful of votes and to hell with civil rights and the costs of prosecution and



fighting these laws up the line to the state Supreme Court, and perhaps into the federal system.

One Councilperson asked an attorney what his solution to street prostitution was and he suggested a "free enterprise" zone where the girls would not be harassed or arrested.

The Council refused to deal with such a rational, sensible, workable solution. You get better press fighting prostitution, not legalizing it.

THE ELECTION AND ALL THAT JAZZ

11-11-84 I tend to relax for a few weeks after an issue of SPR is mailed out. Iiddle and diddle and muse to myself. I put things off until my batteries recharge.

But I did get out and vote. I looked upon the ballot in the sacred booth, and in that canvas-enclosed privacy I could not stomach Reagan or Mondale, liars and evaders both. I muttered, "Time for a change, America!" and carefully printed in the name of a man who would be a much better president. R-i-c-h-a-r-d E. G-e-r-s. Motthe-ll!

Here in Oregon the voters in their wisdom decided they wanted a state lottery to help pay the bills. That's fine with me: I think the spectacle of the government urging people to gamble, waggling a million-dollar carrot before their noses, is wonderful for two reasons---it demeans government and reduces it to its true morality, and it gives the people what they want---an opportunity to act stupidly and to pay for their stupidity.

I'll happily avoid the lottery like the plague, having better ways of wasting my money, and will be content to let others pay more than their share of taxes as I pay less.

On the other hand, the voters defeated a property-tax limitation measure---by less than 16,000 votes out of over half a million, I believe---and will now have to deal with the result: the stumble-bum state legislature this new year will cobble together a sales tax and offer it to the people in a special election. The measure will likely be loaded with carrots to attract support: dedication of a percentage to property-tax relief, renter-relief, and a big chunk to school support.

After fifty or sixty years of defeating sales taxes, ah predict the people this time will gulp down the evil-tasting stuff and say yes. Especially if food and medicine are exempted.

How do you avoid paying much in the way of sales taxes? Buy [if you can] big ticket items before the tax

takes effect. A car, a new fridge, stove, VCR...

But what I find hilarious is the extreme likelihood that with a depression closing its jaws on this country--and the world--the "take" from a sales tax will be smaller than expected, and as property values shrink, the property tax totals will decline, throwing the government into another agony of "revenue shortfall."

As for the economy at the moment ---it's poised on the brink of collapse. This will surprise everyone but me---and you, if you believe me.

I won't bore you with the accumulation of reasons I believe this; it is rooted in the fundamental fact that sooner or later a debt bubble will collapse, and the current incredibly expanded and tremblingly weak bubble has been losing air and credibility and stability for the past year at ever-increasing speed.

And we'll probably see a national yearly deficit approaching 300 billion dollars in 1986, chaos in the markets, a paralyzed administration and congress, and bankruptcies by the hundreds of thousands.

[And if there is a trillion dollars being wiped off the asset side of the national ledgers because of uncollectable loans and bankruptcies, and losses of jobs/incomes, a government deficit of 300 billion will not overcome the net loss of money in this country, which means deflation as fewer dollars command more buying power. Welcome to The Second Great Depression, America.]

The social and cultural consequences will be staggering. What will happen when the Yuppie generation discovers its high-paying jobs disappearing and its mortgages unpayable? The current bubble of enthusiasm for individuality, private enterprise, less government regulation and contempt for unions will melt away like ice cream in a stew pot. The Yuppie self-reliance will turn out to be masquerading self-interest, and that will scream like a spoiled baby for succor from the Big Mama Government.

Big Mama will keep them alive, all right, but at a terrible cost to them in humiliation and shattered illusions. Ah, how awful to be rubbing elbows with the old welfare class in the foodstamp lines!

And meanwhile, those who prudently saved their money and put it into 12% certificates and bonds will smile and live high, having seen all this coming. Because the interest on their savings, locked-in, will be the equivalent of 30% interest rates as the purchasing power of every dollar grows and grows...as prices go down and down.

Glory be to God! I have seen the future!

The death of Jim Fixx, "Mr. Jogging", the author of the trend-setting book THE COMPLETE RUNNER (Or was it THE COMPLETE JOGGER?) will I expect make some dedicated joggers think twice. Here was a man who had been running for ten years or so, who ran at least ten miles each day---who suddenly, at age 52, dropped dead of a massive heart attack.

That is similar to Adelle Davis, the author of many bestselling vitamin therapy books (LET'S EAT RIGHT TO KEEP FIT) who disgracefully died in her late fifties or early sixties of liver cancer. She had written that the right vitamins in the right amounts could prevent cancer, as well as almost every other human disease.

But Jim Fixx's father had died of a heart attack in his forties, and there were other, similar, early heart attack problems in his genealogy, so one could say his genes and DNA got him, not jogging.

And perhaps Adelle Davis inherited a tendency to cancer. I don't know about that.

But these examples tend to prove my suspicion that biology rules us and dictates to us even unto death far more than our rational minds. We may propose, but our genes dispose (usually of us).

And how and when our parents die is probably more important to our prospects than our will to live by being in good shape and eating right.

But then there's the psychological theory that we usually only have "permission" to live as long as our parents, according to the Script we've had impressed in us by our parents.

Some Scripts can command an early death by drugs, alcohol, corpulence, other self-indulgence or guilt trips and guilt punishments.

Some people, aware of the Scripting process as described by Trans-

WE INSURANCE AGENTS
WASH UP A VENGEFUL
GOD... ANYTHING AWFUL
THAT ISN'T COVERED IN
OUR POLICIES IS AN
ACT OF KG

WE KEEP
TELLING OUR
CLIENTS:
THE V.G. WILL
GET YOU, IF
YOU DON'T
TAKE OUT!



actional Analysis, can change their Script.

So I think we have two major factors which determine our lives--- built-in bodily/systemic flaws/tendencies which can put a physical limit on life and the emotional dictators we are given by parents and/or circumstances.

A third factor is accidental death/injury---the out of control bus/plane/train/car, wars, psychos.

I neglected to mention talents, which can determine how we live our lives, too.

It gets complicated. But it's fun to examine oneself, others, and project lives into the future, estimate behaviors, calculate responses to given events...

Understanding is power. It allows anticipation, permits early warnings, allows one to dodge in time... And, in some Understanders, allows manipulation of others, setting in place chains of events...

And I suppose intelligence is the prerequisite of understanding. Perhaps intelligence can be defined as the ability to understand and manipulate one's surroundings (including the people therein).

DUE TO ALMOST UNIVERSAL LOATHING, RECRIMINATIONS, THREATS AND DIRE LAMENTATIONS BY THE SUBSCRIBERS, WHO HATED THE ARCHIVES WITH A HATE NOT SEEN SINCE PERRY RHODAN WAS IN FULL FLOWER, I HAVE YIELDED TO THE PRESSURE AND DO HEREBY DECLARE THE ARCHIVES TO BE BANISHED TO THE OUTLANDS, NEVER, EVER TO BE SEEN IN THIS MAGAZINE AGAIN. THE SUBSCRIBERS, IN THEIR WISDOM, WANTED MORE REVIEWS AND MORE GEIS FOR THEIR BUCKS. I HEAR AND OBEY.



STOP ME BEFORE I COMMENT ON THE ECONOMY AGAIN. AAAARRRRGGGH, TOO LATE.

Verry interesting comment by a New York financial analyst today. He was interviewed on the Financial News Network and he said that \$25 per barrel oil was a critical mark; if the free-market (spot market) price of crude oil breaks downward

below that price, the big oil companies lose tax breaks, and the big oil producing countries---notably Mexico and Nigeria---will be in deep shit debt trouble, again. Thus the oil companies and these debtor oil countries have a big vested interest in putting a floor under the price at that level.

We'll see what happens this spring when the price of crude is traditionally weakest.

In the meanwhile the value of the dollar keeps on going up in the face of lower interest rates supposedly engineered by the Federal Reserve. [The dollar was supposed to be supported by high interest rates, by the way. Why it is continuing to rise in the face of declining interest rates has not been explained anywhere.]

Commodity prices continue to decline, including the leading indicator prices among the commodities [tallow, tin, burlap].

Steel production continues to decline. The Christmas sales figures are turning out to be not that great after all [retailers lie a lot during the selling season to put up a good front, to convince people good times are still with us, to encourage them to spend more money on gifts] and new car sales are beginning to go soft even as the car companies continue to slyly raise the prices on new cars and optional equipment.

The crucial question is: will Congress have the guts to cut or diminish federal deficit spending and/or increase taxes? If so, it will be taking a lot of billions of dollars out of an economy which has become used to (and needs!) a 200 billion dollar federal deficit, extraordinarily high consumer debt increases, and very high business borrowing. The threat/promise to overhaul the tax system will tend to freeze investment plans, putting

a lot of projects on hold, further paralyzing the economy.

Congress and Reagan/Regan will be damned if they do and damned if they don't.

INSULATION FROM THE IDIOTS IN CONTROL IS THE WAY TO GO...

It all comes down to lessening dependence on the wobbling national economy, the idiots in Congress and in the administration who are continuing to mismanage the economy. [But they're trapped in accumulating problems created by short-term band-aid solutions. Now the country needs major surgery, they know it, but may not have the guts to perform it.]

My way... I had an experience with the "budget" printer who prints SER's envelopes for me. Last time I took in 2000 envelopes to be printed they wanted to charge me about \$143. for the job. I yelled, kicked, screamed, howled, was outraged...[since it had been under \$50 before, because a change in ownership of the company] and the manager generously gave me a "break" by only charging me \$65. [If I hadn't supplied the envelopes they'd have charged \$277!].

I just went through that routine again with them. Got the "break".

Then Paulette asked if it was possible to rubber stamp the required information on the envelopes---name and address, the ISSN number, the second class mail indicia---and I kicked myself for not thinking about that option myself. I just called the post office mail classifications office to check---and the woman said it was okay.

Now, rubber-stamping 1500 envelopes is a chore, make no mistake, but saving \$65. is a lure I am unable to resist. Hell, I can do the job over a few weeks at night while watching TV---during cold remedy commercials.



And don't be surprised if SFR is printed by a real budget printer on regular letter-sized paper, hand-gathered by me, and hand stapled by me (if I can find a printer who will do 2000 copies for \$1,000 or less).

I'd seriously consider getting the 466 fixed up and running off SFR again on it, but the post office has a rule that says mimeographed magazines cannot be mailed at second class rates.

But back to self-sufficiency. (Or at least reducing my dependence on the money economy.) I created a fireplace furnace some years ago. Not exactly a furnace--a blower, iron pipes in the fireplace which heated in a fire and which blew heated air into the room, that kind of thing. But [I admit] it didn't work too well. The pipes took too long to heat up and there wasn't enough area in the pipes to get the air hot enough. And the fireplace screen wasn't airtight enough. Too much heat went up the chimney---wasted!

I've been puzzling over how to improve the system. [\$700 for a first-class fireplace insert seems excessive. There has to be a simpler, inexpensive way...] And now I think I may have a solution, but I am going to ask all you readers for an opinion.

Why not use a cheap auto muffler for an air heating unit positioned at the rear of the fireplace (or even over the fire)? A muffler has baffles in it to guide the air through it, and I understand the cheap mufflers don't have a lining of whatever to possibly create ugly gases when the unit is heated by a fire. The metal is galvanized sheet steel, thick enough to hold up for at least a winter, and thin enough to make for quick-heating of the air passing through.

Any problems anyone can think of for this idea? Sears has a \$9.99 muffler in its new catalog. If I could rig up two of those...

I don't know why, but I'm becoming attuned to the oil-burning furnace in the basement. A little shudder goes through me when I hear it kick on every few minutes. A part of my mind sees 97¢ per gallon oil spraying into the burner...and a gauge in the back of my head reads 481 gallons in the tank in early December...380 gallons in the tank in early January... Will it last til April?

And every morning on my bike, on the way to the post office, or to the store, I see scraps of wood in the streets, on parking strips, on the sidewalks. The thought comes to me: if I scavenged all this wood I see, every day, I'd have enough to feed the fireplace

a big chunk of the winter. Mostly what I see is kindling-type pieces, but once in a while larger pieces appear. There are places where free wood in larger quantities is available, and new construction always has scrap wood for the taking. I'd soon discover where to go, who to ask... No question, I could gather enough free wood to save a big part of the oil bill. Over half, I think. Maybe more.

And then there is the paper and cardboard, the food cartons, etc. that we throw away. All wasted. Pounds of paper every day! Junk mail every day. Tons of paper and food containers thrown away by litterbugs on the streets and sidewalks and lawn every day!

A part of me sees all this and considers it a sin. Waste is a sin. Maybe [probably!] I have this lurking morality in my head from having grown up in the Great Depression. I didn't realize it was a depression then. I was a kid. But I must have absorbed the waste-not, want-not philosophy during that period, from hearing my mother and father talk, from hearing my grandparents and uncles talk...

I think that if I can perfect a fireplace blower/heater, and get free wood for it, and grow a big part of the food in the backyard...then the part of me at work in this area of my life and thinking will be happy, and content, and will sit back and say, "Hey, I've beaten the system!" and "Mom and dad, and uncle and aunt and grand-dad and grandma...you'd be proud of me!" and "Now let all those damned wastrels and profligates and lazy sons-of-bitches, and welfare wimps go to hell! Let the government fuck up the country all it wants! I'm secure! Let them all stew in their juices!"

Yeah!

And, of course, the gardens, the greenhouse. More on those later in the year.

THE BURNT LANDS--AN UPDATE

1-12-85 Dan Zitin, editor of Fawcett Books, called and wanted a change of Prologues in the novel.

I'll be writing what is essentially a Synopsis of THE SWORD OF ALLAH for insertion ahead of the main body of THE BURNT LANDS, thus giving new readers an understanding of What Has Occurred, and refreshing the memories of those who have read THE SWORD OF ALLAH but may not remember it that clearly.

Deadline is February 1. No problem.

Elton and I have two really good ideas to develop for near-future science fiction/intrigue/suspense novels. They'll be worked on in February and March.

I have a disaster-thriller novel partial to work on titled THE KILLER PLAGUE, stalled for six months while I worked out some problems in it and as other work intruded.

I HAD TO DUMP "AND THEN I SAW..." FROM THIS ISSUE, TO MAKE ROOM FOR MORE LETTERS, MORE REVIEWS, AND ELTON'S COLUMN WHICH ARRIVED AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT. BUT THAT'S CALLED EDITING. IT'S A DIRTY JOB BUT SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO IT.

WHY AM I STILL IN ORATOR?

Regarding editing. SFR is becoming too...too political. I find more letters responding to my political/social thoughts in SFR than to the reviews. A bad sign. And I bitterly resent wasting all those movie/TV reviews I wrote for this issue. Yet I know that by rights those items--politics, economics, culture notes, sex notes, movie/TV reviews, non-sf book reviews...all these belong in a personal journal instead of SFR.

I would like to make SFR a real battleground dealing with writing, publishing, reviewing of sf and fantasy. I am cutting back on my Financial News Network addiction (THE WALL STREET JOURNAL will have to be enough) and find that reading

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 59



INTERVIEW: L. NEIL SMITH

CONDUCTED BY NEAL WILGUS

SFR: First, let me congratulate you on winning the 1982 Prometheus Award -- the prize given by the Libertarian Futurist Society for the best libertarian novel. Your winning novel, *THE PROBABILITY BROACH*, was your first book and seemed to catch right on. What kind of apprenticeship did you go through before writing a successful book?

SMITH: Not much, as these things go. In reverse chronology, *BROACH* was bought by the first publisher who read it, though I did send a proposal to Avon to begin with; they said they liked it, but they were only doing romances that year. Before that, I did four or five non-fiction pieces, more political and humorous than technical, for *GUNS* magazine in the early 70s, and wrote several short stories, none of which sold until *BROACH* did. Those were the Bernie Gruenblum shorts, plus some set in another universe, featuring a sharpshooter female hero, Kimberly Bright, who hasn't found a home in print yet. She will in *NIGHT DOMAIN*, a novel I'll probably do next year.

In '74 I started a non-fiction book on the roots of the authoritarian personality which remains unfinished, although I deal with the theory in *TOM PAINE WARJ*, my forthcoming Confederacy novel. In '67 I started *THE GOLDMAN PROJECT*, about an attempt by Libertarians to escape Earth, fundamentally in a backyard spaceship -- a very sophisticated one, which would actually work. *GOLDMAN* was never finished and probably never will be.

I did a newsletter, *TANSTAAFL!*, five thousand words every two months. Before that, college and highschool newspaper articles. I wrote my first "book," about a spaceship takeoff, heavily influenced by Disney's *Tomorrowland* segments, in third grade. Ten or twelve pages, hand illustrated by the author. Sure sure I still had it.

SFR: Wait, let's get back to Bernie Gruenblum's shorts. I'm familiar with Gruenblum from *THE NAGASAKI VECTOR*, of course, but I didn't know about the earlier stories. Where did they first appear? Will they be in book form any time soon?

SMITH: I just heard Bernie say, "Leave my shorts outa this!" We will ignore him. Three stories appeared in Judy-Lynn del Rey's *STELLAR* anthologies #5, 6 and 7: "Grimm's Law," "Grandfather Clause" and "Folger's Factor," the last being where he met the Preenies. I am negotiating over a fourth, "Embarrassment Box," with a small Libertarian publication, and have others in the works. I think about collections all the time and have plans for stories about others of my characters (including a novellette I'm currently doing about Ed Bear during the War Against the Czar), but publishers are understandably reluctant: collections don't sell well.

SFR: *PROBABILITY BROACH* was pretty obviously influenced by writers like Robert A. Heinlein and Robert Anton Wilson -- were they the strongest literary influences on you?

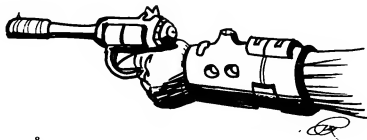
SMITH: Certainly, Heinlein. More than anyone else, he is responsible for what I am, the standards I hold for myself and others. In this respect too, John Wayne -- whom I see as a sort of graphic representation of Heinlein's spirit -- occupies the same place in my life. None of this would have been very orderly, however, if I hadn't read Ayn Rand, who is the third equally-important influence in my background.

Bob Wilson came later, although I'll tell you what I've told him: His books have cheered me up through some mighty rough stretches. I never read anything by him without feeling a whole lot better.

Finally, I should mention Robert LeFevre (whom readers probably know best as Professor Bernardo de la Paz from Heinlein's *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS*), H. Beam Piper, and Raymond Chandler. Rand taught me to think straight, but it cost me my sense of humor for a while. LeFevre taught me to laugh again. I believe Piper would be a Libertarian today, not the kind of thug-conservative some of his heirs are. Chandler is my constant standard for writing quality.

SFR: While we're influence-tracing and name-dropping here let me touch on a subject dear to both of us -- the importance of being Neal, or in your case Neil. I'm used to being the only Neal around, but all the sudden there are Neals all over the place, especially in anarcho-libertarian circles -- at least four of us in the relatively small LFS, Neil Williams in Canadian anarcho-fandom, who knows how many in the closet. Do you find it a problem that you and J. Neil Schulman have such similar looking names and both of you started writing Libertarian SF at roughly the same time? Do readers tend to confuse the two of you?

SMITH: Schulman and I are in frequent contact. He's also used to being the only Neil around; I have trouble calling him by his first name because of the same thing. Not only do readers confuse us, writers do. I have a novel signed to "J. Neil Smith," also a letter from an important Libertarian teacher which had parts I'm sure were intended for Schulman.



When BROACH was published, I sent Heinlein a copy. He admired a joke I'd stolen from Sam Konkin, and then asked: "L. Neil Smith; J. Neil Schulman; F. Paul Wilson -- is someone collecting Ambroses?" Incidentally, I see your initials on a question during this interview and have to blink -- "NW" is the way a certain detective always signs notes to his assistant, "AG."

SFR: Most of the action in BROACH takes place in an alternative world where anarcho-libertarian values have triumphed. How much of the Confederacy represents genuine libertarian goals and speculation and how much is just horseplay, for the fun of it?

SMITH: That's hard to answer unless I know more specifically what you're referring to. BROACH is a Libertarian Utopia, an attempt to concretize values so people (including the author) can see what it might be like living in a free society. Libertarianism is unique among political theories in that it is completely open-ended, however, so that, say, F. Paul Wilson's planet, Tolvie, or J. Neil Schulman's agorist colony Aurora, are just as valid visions as mine. I wouldn't mind living in either of them and I'll bet Paul and Neil feel the same way about Greater Laporte.

I do continue to refine details of the Confederacy in different books. BROACH is about its history and geographical center. THE VENUS BELT is about its frontier and aspirations. THE NAGASAKI VECTOR filled in social details. TOM PAINE MARU is about neolmperialism -- the manifest destiny of a free people. In it, I state that government has no right to exist; anybody anywhere has a right to destroy it, and why. NIGHT DOMAIN will be a look at the "War Against the Czar" in the 1950s and how a free society conducts such an effort. Later I'll be going back in history to show the Whiskey Rebellion and how a rational and moral people would have tamed the West.

SFR: I remember reading in PROMETHEUS, the LFS quarterly, that there will be 30 books in the Confederacy series. Do you really have it planned out that far in advance? Will Del Rey be likely to keep it going that long?

SMITH: Del Rey or anybody who's interested. They want me to branch out and I'm working on it. But I have synopses ranging from one sentence to a page for around thirty novels. The scope is broad, especially since Voltaire Malaise accidentally started his Lost Colonies in THE VENUS BELT.



SFR: And how about the gunplay? I've criticized BROACH and your other books in my own reviews for indulging in too much pointless gunplay. Is this your solution to the old utopian travelog problem of boredom?

SMITH: Partially. I figured the problem with Edward Bellamy's LOOKING BACKWARD and other socialist tracts is that they didn't have enough sex and violence to keep readers interested in the commercials. Also I just plain like guns and enjoy writing about them. But I have a few other things in mind as well.

I make a point never to respond to critics. I understand them and appreciate that they are valiantly attempting to work through a series of personal inadequacies. I do not take them seriously. Neither does anybody else.

As far as gunplay is concerned, we are witnessing the rise of a prissy neoVictorianism -- the kind of mind-set which prefers the word "limbs" to "legs" -- directed not at sexuality this time, but at the human capacity for violence. This pseudo-morality disarms good people making them helpless victims of bad people. I intend to reverse that process -- with a little help from John Wayne, Clint Eastwood and Charles Bronson -- employing the Non-Aggression Principle as an ethical discriminator. It's Libertarianism's chief contribution in the history of human thought and of greater fundamental significance than the invention of Scientific Method.

SFR: I'm afraid your charge of neoVictorianism escapes me. The evidence I see is that violence for its own sake is almost a religion nowadays, not something people are refusing to see. Rather, they glory in it, at least in fiction. And while I wouldn't censor it, I must say it strikes me as basically unhealthy. Self-defense is one

thing -- glorification of gore is another. It might even promote real-life violence, but I suppose you'd dismiss that possibility with contempt, right?

SMITH: Think back to prime-time network series of the last ten years: BARNABY JONES, THE FBI, CANNON, HAWAII 5-0. You knew at the beginning of the program who the bad guy was -- usually a wealthy individual with guns and trophies hanging on his walls. When newscasters report a murder, they show a slide of a gun, even if it's a beating or a stabbing! There was never a minority more persistently or insidiously hounded than gun enthusiasts. The cant is that guns are evil, that anyone foolish enough to try protecting himself -- not relying on the State -- will come to a bad end, and that violence in and of itself, is bad, while non-violence is good. This is a slave-ethic. The networks still run subliminal propaganda against self-defense in "news" and "entertainment" programming. Until you've "seen the fiords," they affect your judgment. They've affected yours.

You seem to be mistaken in another respect: Victorian times were scarcely characterized by sexual abstinence. The cant of those times was repression, the result: bizarre behavior on a cosmic scale. Most of today's kinky fetishes have origins in those times. Similarly when any fundamental human capacity is repressed -- in this case the capacity to do violence -- we see yet another constellation of bizarre activities arise on a similar scale. Hence the gore on the screen and in the streets. Again, think back -- Charles Manson was the product of an anti-violent philosophy. So was Jim Jones.

What makes this possible is widespread Judeo-Christian confusion concerning the morality of violence. This serves the interests of established authority. As I say, most people will tell you that all violence is evil. In fact, it's totally neutral, a human capacity linked with survival, just like sexuality. If you arbitrarily discouraged people from walking or eating, you'd get analogous bizarre results.

The answer -- what I'm struggling with in my novels -- is to face human violence freshly, just as Havelock Ellis did sex. Repressive behavior is no ethic. I'm trying to create a new ethic based on the Non-Aggression Principle. I'm determined to go wherever thoughtful analysis leads me. If this means in the end little child-

ren carrying guns, so be it. It can't help create a better -- and less violent -- society than we live in. As for the suggestion that media violence promotes real life violence, sure it does -- "the way flies cause garbage."

SFR: I know you're a gun enthusiast, but do you really think we'd be better off with everyone armed to the eyebrows as is the case in the Confederacy?

SMITH: Look at the way you've asked the question; it's symptomatic: current technology requires that a person carry a pistol and spare magazine to be minimally defended. Who benefits from a phrase like "armed to the eyebrows"? Certainly the State, and freelance criminals too. You're calling "legs" by a euphemism again, serving the cause of tyranny.

I'm so bitterly opposed to gun control -- of any kind -- that it sometimes makes me inarticulate with rage. I trust it's equally obvious that I would fight any law requiring people to be armed -- that's a hell of a lot more choice than the other side -- in the name of humanitarianism -- would allow you. Always remember: anti-gun laws, like any other law, are enforced at gunpoint.

People must be free to decide for themselves -- and natural selection to take its course -- but you should know that places where guns are banned are the most dangerous places to be. Yet another Ne(i)a!l, Neal Knox, a gun editor I know slightly, did a study demonstrating that during the "Wild West" period, cities like Boston and New Bedford were vastly more violent than say, Abilene or Leadville, owing precisely to the absence of personal weapons. Recently it was shown in Orlando that the mere possibility that a rapist's victim might be able to defend herself virtually erased the crime of rape in that area.

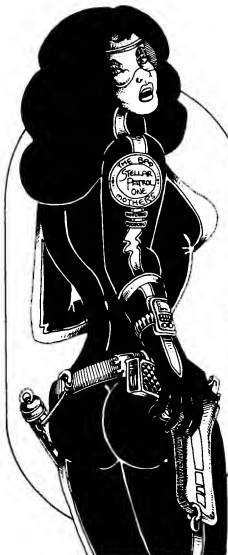
People never learn. They adopt an English attitude that providing you own security is just too nasty to discuss. Too bad, because I've come to believe the one task which cannot be efficiently delegated to a division-of-labor is personal defense. See the pages of any metropolitan newspaper for documentation. The price of not dirtying your hands is death.

Some of your readers will want to know, so I'll anticipate another question or two: I am personally more than familiar with all of the handguns I write about which actually exist, from the tiny Bauer .25 in BELT to Bernie Greenblum's Gold Cup .45. My personal

preferences vary from day to day; I'm extremely fond of my Walther PPK though it's only a .32; I'm impressed as hell with the Detonics .45 automatic and own one of the early models.

The "speculative" weapons in my books are all technically feasible, most of them could be built today with exceptions of the plasma guns and Heller Effect grenades in TOM PAINE MARU, but then that's supposed to be 75 years from now in a culture already considerably ahead of ours.

And no, I don't think that .41s and .45s are "too much gun." Based on empirical evidence, gathered by Jeff Cooper and other experts from years of police and emergency-room records, .357 is just barely adequate (sometimes), and people -- especially women -- ought to carry the biggest most powerful machinery they can handle.



SFR: Wait a minute, wait a minute -- I didn't advocate gun control. I just asked if you really thought we'd be better off armed. "To the eyebrows" was just a play on the popular "to the teeth" platitude -- but look at your (over)reaction. I'm opposed to gun control too, but I remain unarmed and non-violent myself. See the pages of any newspaper and you'll see that you are most likely to be killed by a friend, relative or spouse than by a robber or rapist, and that's an issue of the general level of stupidity, hatefulness and drunkenness, not cool self-defense. Aren't you neoVictorically ignoring that angle?

SMITH: On the contrary. In repeating that nonsense about being killed by someone close, you're unwittingly spreading statist propaganda. It isn't true; there are no facts or figures to substantiate it. Unfortunately, when someone makes up a story, there's no way to call it back. Same reason we're stuck with religion. Bill Rager, the gun manufacturer, once appeared on a talk show with some gun-control crazies offering the same story. He challenged them repeatedly to back it up. They couldn't. The show went on; every now and then he asked whether they'd remembered and they'd shy off. Like Carl Bakal's self-admitted lie that 80,000 people in America have died by gunshot since 1900, they'd simply made it up, then got caught at it by someone willing to make a scene. A great thing, willingness to make a scene.

The old saw about spouse murders being the most frequent kind (along with the intended conclusion that we are all potential murderers) also melts under examination: something like 98% involve previous criminal records. Any cop (and this is an ex-cop talking now) will tell you such a record implies dozens if not hundreds of unreported incidents in any given family before it gets as far as meriting a write-up. So we are not all potential murderers.

As to my (over)reacting, I'm sure George III thought the same of Thomas Paine. You may recall in the '70s how a group of Libertarians or fellow-travelers, surveying the Minerva atoll with the possibility in mind of land-filling it to produce the world's first free country, were run off -- hundreds of miles outside his territorial waters -- by His Malodorous Obesity, the King of Tonga's "navy" consisting of a single lousy WW II-surplus PT boat. A determined individual with a .30-06 could have settled that issue -- PT boats are made of plywood. This is a pivotal issue. A disarmed person is helpless. No

one interested in life, liberty, property or the "pursuit of happiness" can afford to be reasonable. Moral cowardice, disintegrity and compromise betrayed the Revolution to the Federalists, they killed the Whiskey Rebellion, and they're responsible for the conspicuous and disgusting failures of the Libertarian Party. I think Barry Goldwater's (actually Karl Hess's) words about moderation and extremism apply fully here.

One more thing and we'll let this go. I'm armed and that allows me to be non-violent. It also allows me to objectively, historically consider "the general level of stupidity, hatefulness and drunkenness" in society. I do not think people in general are stupid, hateful or drunken, nor are these particularly stupid, hateful or drunken times. You wanna see drunks, check out the 18th Century, those folks could really put it away! But it certainly serves the interests of the State for us to consider one another stupid, hateful and drunken, doesn't it? It justifies all kinds of destructive laws, it pits us against one another instead of against the real enemy.

There's a relationship here with Nathaniel Branden's "sense of benevolence." (He's evidently a shootist, by the way; some years ago I saw a letter from him in a gun magazine asking advice about his .45 Commander.) Because I'm a Libertarian, anarchist, atheist, Discordian, etc., because I recognize no obligations I didn't explicitly undertake, I don't suffer that nagging feeling that I owe everything to everybody and that at any moment they might suddenly decide to collect. This (like being armed -- which banishes fear while instilling prudence and impressing on you who your real enemies are) changes the reality-tunnel you travel in, and allows you to like your fellow-sapient. I'm repeatedly criticized for implying in my books that people in general are rational and benevolent. Once again, I'm right and the critics have their heads wedged.

SFR: Hmm -- I question the validity of your estimates too, but there seems to be no advantage to slogging deeper into that particular quagmire. But let's get back to the gun fights in your fiction. Why is it your Hamiltonian villains are such poor shots? Does philosophical error affect their eyesight? Or are they so busy conspiring evilly that they just neglect to practice enough?

SMITH: A peculiar question, considering that in BROACH they thoroughly eighty-sixed Vaughn Meiss,

filled Win Bear full of holes, ventilated Ed's car on the fly and blew up Clarissa's house. Oscar Burgess managed to miss Win only narrowly in the duel, despite the detective's anticipating his movements. Kleingunther and Bertram were both hit dead-center.

IN VENUS BELT, Hamiltonians zapped an armed security man and killed Lucy, while managing a conspiracy-within-a-conspiracy, building a 230-ship interstellar fleet and kidnapping thousands of women. The only reason Win's assassins didn't do better was that they were remotely controlled "organic robots."

There wasn't much shooting in BUCKETEERS, but Mav walks with a limp because of a primitive's arrow and Srafin is fairly seriously dead, owing to a amateur's bomb.

In VECTOR two antiquarians were killed, Win and Will Sanders both wounded, Bernie variously confused and one of the Freenies cracked, merely as an afterthought. The only thing that saved Bernie's life from Edna was that she was playing with him.

To someone who knows little about guns and gunfights, my good guys don't appear to be such terrific shots either. The reason, of course, is that shooting paper targets is one thing, shooting for your life against hostile acquaintances quite another. The terminal social intercourse in my books is based on what I know of real incidents, and is authentic in flavor. See the "Aimed Citizen" page of THE AMERICAN RIFLEMAN, get a cop to share some war stories with you or better yet, get a gun and see for yourself. That remark about philosophic error affecting one's eyesight is a whole lot less silly than you thought when you wrote it: See the works of Robert Ardrey, Desmond Morris, Jeff Cooper, Bill Jordan, Ayn Rand or Nathaniel Branden.

SFR: There seems to be general critical agreement that BROACH and your third book, THEIR MAJESTIES' BUCKETEERS, are your best and that #2, THE VENUS BELT and #4, THE NAG-ASAKI VECTOR, are somewhat disappointing. Yet I understand that BELT and VECTOR are enjoying better sales. What does this say about critical opinion -- and popular taste?

SMITH: I don't know what you mean by "general critical agreement." There seems to be about as much agreement among the parasites who eke out their minimal livelihood and self-esteem from the work of other people, as there seems to be among the psychotherapeutic priest-

hood which can't agree on definition, diagnosis or treatment for schizophrania.

Academically, more interest has been shown in BELT than any of my other books, since it's concerned with a unique concept of the frontier. BUCKETEERS, I'm afraid, has been dismissed as a Sherlock Holmes pastiche and not looked at very closely. It isn't -- there are surprises and rewards for the careful reader of Mav and Mym, and personally, it's my favorite so far. That's unfortunate, since sales have been disheartening -- my publishers think it's the cover (which I also like very much). I personally believe it may be the unnecessary introduction I didn't want to write, or the slow start in the first chapter for which I am solely responsible. Also I'd intended to supply a fat appendix -- I have reams of data on Sodde Lydfe, Great Foddu and the lamvin -- but ran out of time.

As to popular taste, every day there are indications that there is no such entity -- and I mean that in the most complimentary manner possible: We live in a culture which supports the efforts of Beverly Sills, Joan Baez, Stevie Nicks, Linda Ronstadt and Dolly Parton -- all of whom I like. What does that say about popular taste (or mine)? In my field there is room for Robert Heinlein, Jerry Pournelle, Samuel R. Delaney, Anne McCaffrey, Zenna Henderson and countless non-identical others. What that chiefly says is that the only "superfluous men" are those who feel an urgency to tell others what to dislike.

SFR: Let's see if I've got this right -- if you write a book in which you express your opinion and criticize present-day society that is the greatest thing since the Scientific Method. If I review your book and express my opinion and criticize the book, I'm a parasite with personal inadequacies who tells other people what to dislike. And when you express your opinion about reviewers and criticize them that's just attacking neoVictorianism. Okay, I think I've got it -- heads you win/tails I lose. But are you really so excellent a writer you can't profit from a little feedback?

SMITH: Wow, I really zinged you with that neoVictorianism thing -- I gotta remember to use it again. Let's not confuse a couple of things here: If somebody uses heroin or beats his dog, or crucifies himself every Good Friday, I've no right to complain about it in a political context. That does

not mean I've no right to think it is stupid or say so. (The reason we tend to confuse the two is that living in a majoritarian society, the latter usually automatically implies the former. Only Libertarians as a rule distinguish between the two.)

I merely believe that (to borrow a lovely phrase once again) the market needs critics the way a fish needs a bicycle. I've never bought a book or refrained from buying one because of a review. I've never learned anything from a review of my own work I didn't already know (if that was true) and had either done deliberately or was struggling to overcome. I've read a lot of silly things, both complimentary and otherwise, about my books and my intentions when I wrote them.

Heinlein was criticized for political diatribes and yet they were the main reason I loved his stuff to start with. I'm getting the same crap and it will influence me to exactly the same extent it did him. There are people out there expecting me to "get over" my convictions the way one does a cold. They wouldn't expect a Catholic writer to give up being Catholic -- or writing about it. When I think about it at all, I'm insulted that they consider my beliefs to be that shallowly adopted. To hell with them.

I saw an interview recently with a popular singer -- wish I could remember who it was -- which stated the case well: Critics are irrelevant because they don't come to a work honestly, whether a book, a movie, a play or a recording, the way a real customer does. Their experience is invalid; they have nothing useful to report to individuals who do come to it that way. I'm particularly hard on them right now because the majority of my reviews have been good -- it places me in a unique position to say things which need saying. Later, the law of averages -- not to mention pissed-off reviewer-types -- will catch up with me, no doubt.

SFR: I wonder where you come by this knowledge about what's in a critic's mind when he approaches a book -- are you that famous "omniscient author" I've heard about? I usually start out as a customer myself -- by buying a book like anyone else. I try to reserve judgment till I'm through reading, then I try to review the book as honestly as I can. And I think most reviewers and critics do the same. But let's not quibble, let's get specific. In a very hostile review of your Confederacy books anarchist Neal Williams points to

what he says are lapses of scientific accuracy in things like your treatment of the great apes, fast moving dirigibles, heated streets for melting snow, etc. Isn't this kind of criticism, where valid, valuable as feedback?

SMITH: What's in a critic's mind is pretty self-evident after a couple sentences. Every review is a series of psychological confessions.

Further, you can't start out buying a book like anyone else, for reasons Werner Heisenberg explained better than I can, nor "reserve judgment" any more than a jury can "ignore that remark" when foolishly instructed to do so. Honesty-wise, I'm willing to assume

A BUREAUCRAT SWIMS
IN AN OCEAN OF PAPER,
ADELMAN, THE PRESIDENT
AND CONGRESS ARE LIKE
THE SUN AND THE MOON; THEY
MOVE THAT SEA OF PAPER
WITH THE TIDES, BUT THEY
HAVE VERY LITTLE EFFECT
ON THE BUREAUCRATS SWIMMING
IN THAT SEA.



thou knowest thyself -- but where do you get your information about the minds of other critics?

As to Williams, I see no reason to alter my policy of not replying to criticism. His personal problem is that he can't read. I'd suggest he begin with the dictionary.

SFR: Let's move on to your STAR WARS spinoff -- the Lando Calrissian series. How did it come about that you were picked to do the series? Or did you volunteer the idea?

SMITH: My editor at Del Rey, Owen Lock, called up one day. I'd never intended writing in anybody else's corpus, and had a bad taste

in my mouth from such things as Murray Leinster's TIME TUNNEL books. On the other hand, I'd read Brian Daley's excellent Han Solo books. For about five nanoseconds I thought: "Would Robert Heinlein do this?" It also helped that I was broke at the time. In the end, though it was an exhausting effort (three books in nine weeks, thanks to circumstances beyond my control or my publisher's), I'm glad I did it. I think Lando books are a cut above the usual in this field. I got to say some things about people (of all species and materials) and I got to live in a world with tractor-beams, death-rays and all the traditional space-opera trappings, a wonderful vacation. I got to play with the MILLENNIUM FALCON! More, I got to be friends with Vuffi Raa, a 'droid of distinction.

SFR: I've been wondering about the MILLENNIUM FALCON. I'm not a STAR WARS fanatic (though I did enjoy the movies) and at this point I haven't seen the third Lando Calrissian book -- perhaps it's all made clear somewhere. But how -- and when -- did the FALCON change hands from Calrissian to Han Solo?

SMITH: Presumably Lando lost her to Han sometime between the end of the third book and the beginning of the first movie. Careless of him. I don't deal with that because I was contractually forbidden to mention any character from the Lucas corpus except Lando.

SFR: I've played around with the Tarot cards enough to appreciate the game of sabacc in the Calrissian books. How did you come up with the idea? Is 23 really a jackpot number?

SMITH: I'm afraid so. Sabacc was only a word in the EMPIRE STRIKES BACK when I started. I thought it'd be nice to make Lando's loss of the FALCON an exception to his usual skill as a gambler. I'd been thinking about a game to be called "Twenty-three," using Tarot cards, because of my interest in the works of Robert Anton Wilson. This seemed the place for it.

If you take notes (or something) while reading the Lando books, you'll accumulate a set of consistent rules. I made some error owing to the haste with which the books had to be written; these were kindly rectified by a number of people at Del Rey who flattered me by being interested enough to do it.

SFR: In spite of our petty differences I think we share a "libertarian futurist" outlook, but let's go into that a little deeper. Personally I've little use for the Libertarian Party and share the view of people like Sam Konkin and

Erwin Strauss that it's a contradiction in terms. I usually use the term "anarcho-libertarian" to make it perfectly clear that I don't mean the Party and its politics. But I understand you've served on the LP's national platform committee and that you ran for the Colorado legislature on the LP ticket. Are you still active in the Party (and do you still beat your wife)?

SMITH: We have fewer differences than you anticipate. Unlike say, the Voluntarists, I'm not prepared to declare political action per se to be morally intolerable -- they have yet to show that, against our enemy the state, it constitutes initiation of force. On the other hand, when people ask whether there's room within Libertarianism for a Libertarian party, I usually answer "Yes, but not this Libertarian Party."

The LP is full of perfectly decent, principled people whom I love dearly. That understood, I'll add that the party itself, a good deal of its leadership, is authoritarian, hypocritical, reactionary and morally despicable. I've no time for cocktail-party revolutionaries. They're impervious to new ideas. They'll sell anything for a vote, including principle, the future of the movement, the very reasons the party and the movement exist. What's worse, their cowardly, closed-minded methods don't work! By trying to avoid alienating one marginal group of voters (say, religionists or the anti-nuclear movement) they alienate everybody else. They characteristically spend -- make that lose -- a hundred dollars to bring in five. If I were the Establishment, and wanted to destroy the concept of human liberty, I could think of no better way than to saddle the movement with the current LP, CATO and any number of individuals it's unnecessary to name since I've already taken shots at them in my books (see the little

piece on "Charlie's Cloud" in THE VENUS BELT, for example).

Yes, I ran for office -- openly as an anarchist to demonstrate that by doing everything "wrong", i.e., by laying all my cards on the table, showing my entire agenda, I could attract more votes than the simpering jelly-spines the LP usually fields. It worked, of course: On \$44.00 I got 15% against the six-term Speaker of the House. And he wore a tie.

Yes, I was on the platform committee, national and state, where I discovered that efforts to explore the implications of Libertarian thought, especially the Non-Aggression principle, and areas such as Children's Rights, Non-Human Intelligence and "little things" like the abomination of Airport Security, were an embarrassment. When I applied for a third stint on the national committee, political maneuvering was employed to keep me off. I never went back. I didn't have to. I reach many more people now, more deeply, than any LP candidate ever dreamed of. Is it a greater testimony to have your lever jerked in a booth or have somebody shell out a couple of hard-earned dollars to read your ideas? My experimental thinking is taken for granted by my readers as being typical of Libertarianism, and my insistence on adherence to principle above all else is the given, rather than the (unwelcome) exception.

And, yes, I still beat my wife.

SFR: That brings up another interesting question. You were a founder of the Prometheus Committee and then of the LFS which revived the Prometheus award. Do you see any conflict of interest in your then winning the second Prometheus for THE PROBABILITY BROAD?

SMITH: Let's make this as bad as we can; if we don't someone else will. I wasn't a founder of the committee, but the founder. Not,

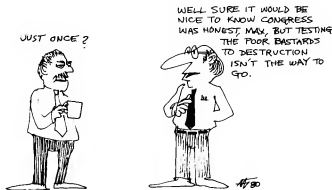
however, of LFS nor as I said, even a member. I first informally proposed a substantial cash award -- in gold -- for Libertarian SF to Dave Nolan and John Hilberg at the 1977 LP convention in San Francisco. (The Sheraton Palace where we met became the dirigible "San Francisco Palace" in my first novel which I was outlining at the time. The liner "Bonaventura" in THE VENUS BELT was the Los Angeles Bonaventura where the next convention met. LP10 in Denver came next; like Liz Taylor, I may eventually get around to Nicky Hilton.)

Rand (re Spillane) to the contrary, SF is the literature of optimism and social change. Like every other field of endeavor, it has been too long dominated by enemies of liberty. Unlike them, however, it's eminently worth salvaging. The idea, since there was (and is) no other money award in the field, and since writers are notoriously broke, was to overwhelm the SF community with as big a prize as possible, comparable to the advance an author might receive for his work in the first place. I had five thousand dollars in mind, a pittance, considering the short-term gains and long-term leverage it could achieve.

The idea went over like screen doors in a submarine. Later at a smaller meeting in Las Vegas I brought it up in the presence of "Space Cadets" whose consciousness had been "raised" by the anti-futurist biases of tinythinkers like Murray Rothbard, Charlie Koch and Ed Crane, gagrined at the possibility that space colonization, life extension and the like might be linked with the LP.

Parenthetically, I was stunned by this attitude: Rothbard, going on about the silliness of property and liability conventions in space -- in the year of the Moon Treaty, almost at the very moment people were worried about Skylab falling on their heads! I was angry because I had proposed, in platform and elsewhere, a national defense plan much like that the Reagan Administration is now developing (with the added fillups of decentralizing conventional defenses, distributing arms to the populace, ending the draft, denationalizing the militia and selling off high-capital items like battleships and artillery). Even Dave Nolan (a charter member of Prometheus) opposed it.

I'd visualized the LP as a realization of John Joseph Bonforte's Expansionist Party in Heinlein's DOUBLE STAR: humane, progressive, oriented to free enterprise and technology. We could have seized the issue of non-nuc-



lear strategic defense, with its numerous uniquely Libertarian qualities, made it ours. We could have been ahead by that much! But we -- rather, they -- fucked up.

Individuals who agreed with me in some of these areas, including Hilberg, who backed the first award financially, constituted the first Prometheus Committee. I said then, as founder and chairman, that my own works were never to be considered, specifically because of conflict of interest, and because I didn't need any encouragement to write Libertarian SF. Almost everyone disagreed with me about this, but I held firm.

I'm a terrible Leader of Men. The struggle to establish myself professionally, a couple of illnesses and a divorce reduced my handling of the award to shambles. It was taken up later, with permission, by Michael Grossberg and the LFS and they have labored, without my interference, to bring it up to date and keep it going. As originator of the concept, I've stayed out of LFS's hair and intend to continue doing so. Because of my lack of contact with the present administrators -- no connection, no conflict -- plus a bout of post-divorce poverty, I later accepted the award.

My present quarrel with the way things are being run is that tinythink is creeping in. The amount of the award's way down from what's necessary to create the desired effect. Books and authors are being considered which stimulate my gag reflex. The two-level membership stinks of the elitist manner the Party itself has adopted.

If you want to change things, never do it on the cheap. Are you listening, Michael? I like the decision to broaden the award to all genres -- if only because it emphasizes the unique qualities of SF -- but if the frankly ideologic basis of the award is lost in the shuffle, then it will have served no purpose.



There, I've said more than I intended; if I hurt anybody's feelings, sorry. It's bizarre how quickly Libertarians have become ashamed of strongly-held convictions. How easily they've forgotten that we're fighting a war, literally to the death. We believe (with justification) that we're right and everybody else is wrong. If we lose, thousands of years of struggle and accomplishment will be reduced to misery, slavery and extinction. The Prometheus Award was meant to be a weapon in that war. A book by an altruist-collectivist-mystic, no matter how "artistic," is irrelevant and inferior -- within the context as I originally conceived it -- to the purpose of preventing that final disaster.

MY MAGNUM OPUS, "THE JOY OF TAXES"...
LISTED AS FICTION!



SFR: All right, if you don't like the way things are going in the LFS -- or the Libertarian Party for that matter -- why not get in and try to make things go the way you think they should? Especially in a tiny organization like the LFS, you could have a lot of influence.

SMITH: That's the Democracy Trap. In the case of the LP, I simply withdrew my sanction. They're free to pursue their own objectives without being hassled by me; I have a lot more time and energy and sleep better at nights. And as the saying goes, if voting could change things, it would be illegal.

Nor do I see any particular virtue in getting anarcho-libertarians (or left-handed redheads or practitioners of Sumo-yoga) together. Together is for termites, bees and ants.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Smith.

FINAL INTERVIEWER'S NOTE:

Ordinarily the interviewee has the last word (other than a thank you), but in this case I feel a couple of things concerning the Libertarian Futurist Society need clarification. First, the amount of the Prometheus award, which is a Hayek half-ounce gold coin, may not be overwhelming, but it's the best that can be done under the circumstances, with only about 40 members and no other source of funding.

Second, the two-level membership Smith refers to involves a general membership at \$10 a year and an advisory membership at \$50. I objected to this myself and still do, but as a practical matter it was the only way that even the Hayek coin could be financed. Obviously, a couple hundred members at \$10 would do away with the two-level situation and a couple thousand would be a beginning toward Smith's original goal.

For information about joining, write:

Libertarian Futurist Society
PROMETHEUS, Victoria Varga,
Editor
121 McKinley Street
Rochester, NY 14609

Finally, I must protest Smith's statement that "we're right and everyone else is wrong." I don't know what "we" he's talking about but it certainly doesn't include me. That's the kind of togetherness I would have thought Smith objected to the most, but then it takes all kinds of anarchists to make a libertarian world.

TOM PAINE MARU
By L. Neil Smith
Ballantine/Del Rey paperback
1984, 273 pp., \$2.75

REVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

In THE PROBABILITY BROACH (1980) L. Neil Smith started a series of books dealing with the North American Confederacy -- an anarcho-libertarian "nation" in a parallel universe which is visited by Win Bear, a cop from our own totalitarian future who quickly goes over to the other side. In THE VENUS BELT (1980) Bear and his buddies drive the Hamiltonian villains out of the solar system, but not before the villains kidnap thousands of women as breeding stock for their totalitarian dystopias out there somewhere. In THEIR MAJESTIES BUCKETEERS (1981) Smith introduced the planet Sodde Lydfe and its trilateral natives the Lamviin, and in THE NAGASAKI VECTOR (1983) he didn't introduce much new except a coyote character to join his assorted dolphins, chimps, gorillas and miscellaneous.

Now in TOM PAINE MARU, Smith draws from all these earlier stories and puts it all together -- sort of. This time Smith jumps much farther into the future to a time when the Confederacy starship fleets are out scouring the universe for the spawn of the Hamiltonians -- some of whom were displaced into the distant past so that the planets they settled have had time to degenerate into savagery and begin the long climb up again. Such a planet is Vespucci, from which comes the narrator of the story -- YD-038, also known as Whitey O'Thright.

Win Bear does not appear in MARU (that black cover blurb reads "No-win Situation," an apparently unintended pun), but two of his daughters get involved with Whitey after he is rescued from the savages on Sca, a planet Vespucci had intended to conquer. Naturally, Whitey's co-survivor, Lt. Benson Sermader, is a thorough Hamiltonian villain and when the two of them are taken along on the starship Tom Paine Maru, Whitey is converted to Confederacy anarchism while Sermader reveals his true worthlessness and gets it in the end. Meanwhile, the Confederacy goes about its business of toppling tyrannies and fomenting freedom, right and left.



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FANTASY BECOMES SCIENCE FICTION,
CHITTABOB, WHEN ONE CAN USE THE
NAMES OF POWER.

ASIMOV, CLARKE,
HEINLEIN... EVEN
BRUNNER!



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NOISE LEVEL

A COLUMN BY JOHN BRUNNER

ON GOING TO L FROM XLIX AND
RELATED MATTERS

I suppose you may be said in some sense to have "arrived" when your customs officer recognizes you, though I confess I found it a trifle off-putting when, as we came ashore from the Le Havre-Southampton ferry, the guy on duty in the green channel boomed, "Ah, Mr. Brunner! It looks like Mr. Brunner, anyway!"

Fame at last ... Or maybe he just remembered the car. After all, we have been passing that way in at least once a year for ten years.

Still, it was an advantage not to have to explain the shifts we'd been put to in order to keep within our duty-free allowances. You see, people had been showering us with highly taxable presents such as wine and liqueurs and by the time we set off for home after the last engagement of our trip the Stag looked more like a removal van.

And felt like one, too. At least I had the advantage, since I was driving, of adequate room for my feet and legs. Marjorie practically had to be shoehorned into her seat after every stop.

All this was because of my fiftieth birthday parties.

That's right: parties. There can't be all that many people who get five parties for a single birthday. It wasn't quite what we intended but that's the way it turned out. Videlicet and to wit, as follows.

We stopped off in Milan to see my publisher Gianfranco Viviani of Editrice Nord and his family. What had he done? Organized a dinner with Milanese fandom, to mark my birthday.

Later we called on a certain Dr. Antonio Scacco in Bari, with whom Marjorie had corresponded about the European peace movement long before we found out he's an expert on juvenile SF. The local SF people held a gathering for us and took us to dinner to mark my birthday.

Then we held my birthday party, the one at Casalbordino Lido which was announced in an earlier issue of SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. Colin Fine was there from Germany, Tania van der Sande from Belgium, Judy Blish Nikolau from Athens, Dr. Cristina Vanucci from Somalia via Florence (she works for WHO) -- not to mention the mayor of Casalbordino, the chief of police, the town's top lawyer, the local press ... We had an accordionist during dinner and a band afterwards, borrowed from a wedding that was go-

ing on in the other half of the hotel, and that was when we acquired cases of wine and bottles of the regional liqueurs and all sorts of other goodies, many of which we shared out at the convention in Nancy.

It was a great weekend, highlighted by the arrival of two film producers from Cinecittà in Rome (one of whom was actually Danish and won me over on sight by turning up in a 1960 Alfa 2600 convertible) to discuss the possibility of making a film based on THE PRODUCTIONS OF TIME.

Then we went via Venice to the French National SF Con in Nancy, of which more anon; then to Paris to see our friends the Avices and my publisher Gerard Klein of Editions Laffont ... and what had he done?

That's right: laid on a big dinner to mark my birthday.

And then we came home and on the first Saturday of the month held our usual open house, and that turned into yet another birthday party. A long one too, if not quite as long as the one at Casalbordino. It started about half past eight on Saturday and the last guest left for home about quarter to nine on Sunday night.

Lots of people seem to have realized that -- like it or not -- reaching the age of fifty and having to accept that more than half one's life must be behind one is a traumatic sort of experience, and I'm enormously obliged to everyone who made the transition so much more fun than I had dared to hope. My chief regret is that in Paris I was suffering from some kind of horrible neuralgia, and couldn't do justice to the splendid company Gerard had assembled for us.

Still, I put away a lot of his splendid wine and cognac!

As usual, half our trip was business. The other half gave us a chance to make our second tour of the Italian South. From Milan we headed for Taviano, in the mountains, because we'd had a fan letter from a young German called Jürgen Rumpf who's attempting to bring back to life as a commune an abandoned village not far from there. We had a strange but memorable night at Bellavalle as guests of one of his friends, a guy from Catanzaro, under house arrest after serving a nine-year sentence for his part in a jewel robbery. Or at least, so we were told.

Then we tried to visit Siena ... That was a mistake. We turned up on a Sunday and the town was

THE GREAT YEDRASILL CABBAGE
IS ABOUT THIRTY LEAGUES DUE WEST.



full; we couldn't even find a place to park, let alone a place to stay. In the end, after struggling with a labyrinth of dead ends and one-way streets, we drove into the country again and wound up at a perfectly fascinating place: Bag-ni Vignoni, a small hillside town where hot springs bubble out of the ground. The main square is the nearest thing I've seen, outside Pompeii, to a Roman forum as it must have been in classical times -- plus a huge tank of steam-ing water in the middle!

On the coast south of Terracina we stayed at Sperlonga: Piled up on the top of a rocky promontory it has so many changes of level and direction that I had the sen-sation of walking through an Escher drawing. We went on to visit Her-culanum, having been told it was more worth seeing than Pompeii, but found we disagreed and spent the night at the latter place. Our next target was Alberobello, in the land of the trulli, those uni-que beehive-shaped stone buildings originally heaped up thanks to a law against creating permanent structures. On our way to it we found the incredible city of Mat-tera, where since the Middle Ages people have lived in caves cut from the sides of a river gorge. I'm not sure how many of them are still inhabited, but many are cer-tainly still in use.

And on the Adriatic coast, we discovered Portignano, where there are other caves mentioned in the first of all encyclopaedias, Did-erot's, due not to people but to waves undercutting the headland on which it stands. We sat in our ho-tel room playing Scrabble and watching a magnificent thunderstorm far out at sea.

After which, Bari, and then Casalborgino Lido.

Later still, as I already men-tioned, we went on to the French SF con in Nancy, which unfortunat-ely wasn't just a convention, but an attempt to launch a so-called Festival. I'm sure the organizers meant well; unfortunately, despite having a lot of support from the municipality, the Banque Nationale de Paris, the PIT (post and tele-phone service) and other sponsors, they made a great many mistakes due to a combination of ambitious-ness and inexperience.

In the city's Palais des Cong-eres there were, for instance, ex-hibitions of holograms and modern communications technology. When I toured the former on Saturday morn-ing I was the only visitor.

Three days before leaving Brit-ain I'd been informed that I was

I USED TO FANTASIZE MARRYING A WOMAN 40 YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME, BUT CHRIST! SHE'S NEARLY 60!



scheduled to take part in a panel in front of 280 local businessmen and students to discuss the future of banking and the future of com-munications. My French is toler-able, but I had to write back and say that in the time available I couldn't possibly mug up the nec-essary technical jargon to cope with such complex subjects. None-theless they went ahead. We didn't get anything like 280 people -- I counted at the start and found 48 though it must have gone up to six-ty-plus later on -- and the people from the Musee de La Villette who were supposed to talk about com-munications didn't show up. Thank goodness for the questioners from the floor who kept us going!

The rest of the proceedings took place in a huge 19th-Century tobacco factory, a really surreal building. (I wandered all over it, and in a room under the eaves came on a pile of sticks and a broken mirror on the floor, like the re-mains of some interrupted black magic ritual.) But it was far too big, and very expensive to rent, and security was impossible. Some-one made off with a whole batch of irreplaceable ceramic sculptures from the art show.

What really depressed Marjorie and me was that the fan attendance -- well over 200, we were told -- could easily have been accommodat-ed in a traditional brasserie op-posite the Prantel where we were being put up. In fact, the Excel-sior -- that was the name of the brasserie -- rapidly became the focal point of the con. Investig-ating with my usual 'satiabile cur-i-osity, I discovered that it had public rooms on two floors, where local clubs hold meetings and even jazz concerts on such a scale that it alone, plus a couple of rooms in the basement of the hotel ac-ross the road, could have harbored an entire convention. Instead of which, the Palais des Congres was

ten minutes' walk in one direction from the hotel, the Manufacture de Tabacs was at least as far the op-posite way, and we never managed to find a single one of the numer-ous cinemas which during the Fest-ival were supposed to be showing all-SF programmes.

Not that even as Guests of Hon-or, we could have got in without paying full price. Before being entitled to the cut rate for Fest-ival subscribers, people were ob-ligated to affix a passport photo to their membership cards ...

Autres pays, autres mœurs, of course. But it did strike Marjorie and me as a great shame that a bunch of enterprising and hard-work-ing folk should have committed all over again the same sort of mis-takes we've seen so frequently at other science fiction gatherings.

There used to be a handbook for convention organizers issued by the British SF Association, but I believe it's out of print and talk of updating and republishing it has led nowhere. (A pity; it in-cluded rather a good article on "The Care and Feeding of a Guest of Honor" by guess who?) One of the projects which perhaps World SF or the Eurocon Committee ought to consider is the preparation of something similar, adapted to non-English-speaking countries. If people in the States (Boskone, are you listening?) have such guides available, I'd like to receive cop-ies, and will make certain they get passed on to the proper quar-ters.

A possibly simpler alternative would be if their existence could be regularly announced in SHARDS OF ABEL, Roelof Goudriaan's admir-able international news-fanzine, un-der some such heading as SO YOU PLAN TO ORGANIZE AN SF CON? SOB is published at \$5/six issues from Postbus 1189, 8200 BD Lelystad, The Netherlands.

BOOK REVIEWS BY GENE DEWEESE

CALL ME SNAKE

By Solis

Berkeley, Paperback, \$3.95

Snake may not be as funny as the Snake in B.C. but he seems about on a par with Garfield lately. And it's hard not to like anyone who, when he answers the phone and finds a house plant on the other end of the line, complains about obscene fern calls.

POHLSTARS

By Frederik Pohl

Ballantine/Del Rey, \$2.95

I can't say that I liked every story in this collection of a dozen, but there are two items that by themselves are more than worth the cover price. First, there's "Second Coming," a biting and funny and probably accurate 500 words about what might happen if the aliens who kidnapped Jesus 2,000 years ago ever brought him back.

And then there's "The Wizard Masters of Peng-Shi Angle." Originally known as "The Wizards of Pung's Corners," it was first published in GALAXY in 1959. Then it was translated into Chinese for publication in China. Here the Chinese version has been retranslated into English by someone who had never seen the original. In addition, the translator (F. Gwyn-plaine MacIntyre) has provided a fascinating introduction and seven pages of notes explaining various oddities of such translations.

For instance, when proper names are translated into Chinese, they are represented phonetically by pictographs whose literal meanings have no relationship to anything. The pictographs representing Coca Cola, for example, can be literally translated as "Bite the wax tadpole." And Pohl's imaginary breakfast cereal "Elixo-Wheats" ended up being represented by pictographs meaning "The son has approval to tie the Buddhist nun to the hermaphrodite."

Also, if you're lucky enough to have the original story available (it was reprinted in *THE MAN WHO ATE THE WORLD*, a 1960 Pohl collection), you can spend hours comparing the two and seeing just how much unintentional havoc translations can wreak. And realizing that, with such language problems always existing between nations, it's little wonder that the world is in the shape it's in.

RED LIMIT FREEMAN

By John DeChancie

Ace, Paperback, \$2.75

In this sequel to STARRIGGER, Jake McGraw and his evergrowing band of fugitive adventurers are still on the "Roadway," a maze of highways and dimensional portals that could well lead all the way back to the birth of our universe. He's still driving the mammoth "truck" controlled by a smart aleck supercomputer with his father's personality imprinted on it and he's still running from practically everyone he met in the first book. He's also still narrating their adventures in the same irreverent, exciting and occasionally hilarious style that every now and then reminds me of the late H. Allen Smith, one of the very few humorists who could make you laugh out loud. For instance, after a particularly mind-boggling period during which they've been helplessly shuttled from one alien world to another, he comments, "There is only so much wonderment the human mind can absorb before it just takes a cab."

The only difficulty with RED LIMIT FREEMAN is that it is not so much a sequel to the earlier book as it is a continuation, and ideally the two should be read together, not several months apart. But they very definitely should be read, and I'm eagerly looking forward to how-

ever many more volumes it takes for Jake to find out who really built the Roadway, maybe even who created the universe. If the answers are anything like what has been hinted at so far, they'll be fresh and surprising and probably funny. (The ending to this volume doesn't really answer very many questions, but it's certainly funny in a shaggy sort of way.)

SUN'S END

By Richard Lupoff

Berkeley, \$2.95

Eighty years after his near death in a space station construction accident, Daniel Kitajima is revived in an artificial body that can among other things, survive without protection in both the vacuum of outer space and the liquid nitrogen ocean of Titan. Not only that, he's one of the richest men in the solar system because of the money that poured in as a result of the publicity that surrounded the accident.

Earth however, is not in as good a shape as Daniel. The greenhouse effect is due to wipe everyone out in another century, and it is eventually up to Daniel to finance and lead an expedition to a recently discovered tenth planet in hopes of getting some helpful hints from whoever or whatever is responsible for the radio beacon on the planet.

With strong elements of SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN, Neil R. Jones' "Zorome" series, and 2001, not to mention PLANET STORIES, SUN'S END keeps you reading and enjoying and wondering what's coming next. The ending is a little too confusing.

PUBLICITY DIRECTORS, EDITORS,
PUBLISHERS, AUTHORS...ARE
URGED TO SEND BOOKS FOR REVIEW
TO GENE DEWEESE

2718 N. Prospect
Milwaukee, WI 53211

He reviews sf and fantasy for
THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL as well
as SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and
other magazines.

ing for my taste, but that's a minor complaint and doesn't detract from the fun of the previous 275 pages. (And for those who are interested in that sort of thing, there are occasional bonuses tossed in by the astronomical illiterate who apparently did the copy editing. For instance, it's explained at one point that one of Pluto's moons is visible from far-away Earth only because of its extraordinarily high "libido.")

EMERGENCE

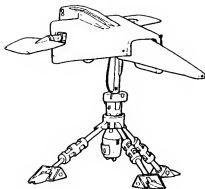
By David R. Palmer
Bantam, \$2.95

Seen through the eyes of a brilliant, witty and very likable eleven-year-old girl named Candy Smith-Foster, *EMERGENCE* starts out as an excellent post-atomic novel with echoes of early Heinlein and it only gets better as it goes along. She learns early on that there is a reason for her brilliance and that there are others like her who have survived, but finding them is only the first of her problems. There are times near the end where developments may take a turn toward melodrama, but the characters (particularly Candy herself) are so interesting and real and the writing so gripping that it doesn't matter. All that matters is that you find out what happens on the next page. This is the one that gets my vote for a Nebula this year.

OMNI'S SCREEN FLIGHTS/SCREEN

FANTASIES Ed. by Danny Peary
\$35 hardcover; \$17.95 Paperback

In these 300 large pages, there's a little something for everyone. There are articles by SF writers (Asimov, Ellison and Bloch, among others) about SF movies. There are articles by directors such as Cornel Wilde's story of how he filmed John Christopher's *NO BLADE OF GRASS*. There are interviews with directors such as Ridley Scott of *ALIEN* and *BLADE RUNNER* and George Miller of *MAD MAX* and *ROAD WARRIOR*. There's an article by Harry Harrison about how his *MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM!* was warped into *SOYLENT GREEN*. There's even an interview with Buster Crabbe of Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers and Tarzan fame/notoriety and one with the well-known movie factory known as Roger Corman. At \$17.95 for a trade paperback, the price is a bit steep, but if you have the money to spare or can locate a copy at the library, it's sure to give you an interesting few hours.



DIXON 80

HELLSTAR

By Michael Reaves & Steve Perry
Berkely, \$2.95

On a generation ship headed for Alpha Centauri, the basic laws of nature begin breaking down, starting at the particle level and working up. Instead of delineating exactly what effects such changes might have, however, the authors have largely settled for what they call "randomization." That is, when the laws start to break down, no one knows what is coming next -- an exploding computer panel, sections of the floors and walls that turn rubbery and glow, etc.

On the positive side, the generation ship itself seems thoroughly thought out, rather like a high tech small town. Also most of the characters are interesting and engaging and the adventure and suspense keeps you turning pages to see what happens next. For a time there's even a murder to be solved, with the head of security taking the role of a small-town sheriff quite well.

All in all *HELLSTAR* is an entertaining 300+ pages, but I can't help but hope that a really hard science writer like Robert L. Forward tackles the same subject one of these years.

ICEHEDGE

By Kim Stanley Robinson
Ace, Paperback, \$2.95

In the 23rd Century Emma Weil chronicles a Martian revolution and a matutinous attempt to get an interstellar expedition under way.

In the 26th century, A stonehenge-like structure is found on Pluto, possibly a monument left behind by the expedition's crew. Or at least such is the desperate hope of archeologist/historian Hjalmar Nederland who discovered Emma's journal in a Martian archeological dig and became obsessed with it and with her. In the 27th century a descendant of Nederland's, Edmond Doya, finally ferrets out the truth.

Like Robinson's earlier *THE WILD SHORE*, *ICEHEDGE* is strong on character and style and is excellently written. The story itself moves slowly, but that's okay. The worlds in which the three episodes are set are so well and interestingly developed and there is such an all-pervading sense of mystery throughout the second and third episodes that the "atmosphere" alone might be enough to keep you reading, regardless of the story. In an odd sort of way it reminded me of an up-to-date version of Leigh Brackett's memorable Mars stories from *PLANET* and *STARTLING*, only without the Martians or a lot of the pulp melodrama.

THE PARADOX MEN

By Charles L. Harness
Crown, \$8.95

Summarizing the plot of *THE PARADOX MEN*, besides being next to impossible, wouldn't be all that helpful. Suffice it to say, it involves time travel, a Gossey-like superman, at least one ship capable of circumnavigating the universe, a repressive 22nd Century dictatorship, a sybaritic sadomasochist and a lot more. According to a recent article by the author, he was purposely emulating A.E. van Vogt when he wrote the original, shorter version of this novel, "Flight Into Yesterday," published in a 1949 *STARTLING STORIES*. And he did a bang-up job. For me, at least, the fast action and often portentous and philosophical dialogue, not to mention the introduction of a new plot twist every few hundred words, was very reminiscent of van Vogt at his best, as in *SLAN* and "Null A" novels. There's lots of pseudo-scientific gobbledygook, and there's at least one major unexplained logical lapse, but it still gave me a few hours of real reading pleasure, not unlike the sort I got from the latest *Dune* epic a few months ago. And now that I think about it, not unlike the sort I got from reading "Flight Into Yesterday" thirty-odd years ago.



LETTERS

LETTER FROM FORREST J. ACKERMAN
"The Sci-Fi Guy"
2495 Glendower Avenue
Hollywood, CA 90027
November, 1984

'SPIFFY SKIFFY REWARD

'How do you suppose the winners would feel if I began a campaign to disdain the Nebulas as "simply SF stories of nebulous worth?"

'If I convinced my fans that the Hugo ain't nothing but a sandwich?

'If I put down the Campbell Award at every opportunity as "soupy science fiction?"

'If I overlooked no chance to label (libel) the Pilgrim Award as one for anti-progress?

'If I tried to brainwash the members of the prestigious Science Fiction Writers of America into pronouncing SFWA as the hideous syphilitic-sounding "sefwah?"

'Well, for a quarter of a century there's been a fruitless tilting at a windmill called "Sci-Fi" on the part of quixotic individuals who will never accept the fact that it's here to stay, it ain't going away. I'm surprised that someone wasn't lynched or the big sign vandalized at the Worldcon hotel last Labor Day when 8,300 fans and pros were electrically welcomed to the Sci-Fi convention.

'I never thought the science fiction world would engage in its own 30-years War but it's a battle I won a long time ago, only like a dead dinosaur, the message still hasn't reached the reasoning centers of some of "the loyal opposition." I now propose that the opponents of the term "Sci-fi" as an alternate for "SF" create an acceptable term to categorize schlocky pseudoscience fic flicks. "Sci-fi" doesn't do the trick, not when it's applied to DUNE, 1984, 2010 and a major hit like NIGHT OF THE COMET. I hereby offer ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS to the individual who can coin the word to describe what "sci-fi" was never meant to be ... and isn't.'

'SON OF OLD MAN HENDERSON

'What I'm about to say won't mean much if you aren't familiar with Kris Neville's minor masterpiece, "Old Man Henderson." Written before the first astronaut actually set foot on the moon, it tells the sad tale of the fictional first lunar lander who in his old age has just become that crazy old coot down the street who bores the neighborhood kids with his never-ending story of how he was the first one Up There. What, they deride with uncomprehending childish cruelty, is so great about that? -- their dads are pilots who regularly roundtrip it to Mars. My relation of the plot may not be 100% accurate -- I haven't read the story again for perhaps 20 years -- but that's the gist of it.

'The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Seventy fans (mostly; several pros present) met for a banquet and an after-dinner speech. Speaker of the event was Harlan Ellison, world's greatest entertainer since the demise of Al Jolson, who was born about the same time as LASFS. Admitting that he had attended only four meetings in 22 years and didn't know what he was doing there, nevertheless he rose to the occasion and entertained all of us (including your humble obedient servant) mightily -- so much so, in fact, that I phoned him the next day to congratulate him. But sadly lacking were former Lasfians who theoretically could have been there. Russ Hodgkins. Bruce Yerke. Charlie Horgim. Jean Cox. A.E. van Vogt. Rick Sneyer. Bjo & John Trimble. Alan and Mary Hershey. Jack Jardine. Martin Varno. Jerry Bixby. Roy Squires. Eph Konigsberg. Peggy Crawford. Ross Rocklynne. Pogo. Dave Lesperance. Elmer Perdue. Betty Perdue. Tigrina. Robert Heinlein. Helen Urban. Hal Clark. Ray Bradbury. Tom and Terri Pinckard. Lil Neville. Frank Quattrone.

chi. Walt Daugherty ... The list of absentees that come to mind is seemingly endless. Bob Bloch, bless him, did send a nice appropriate letter. Currently active in the club, Jerry Pourmelle and Larry Niven probably had professional commitments elsewhere. But present at the occasion was the sole surviving member from the first meeting, a Charter Member, an Honorary Member, a former Director, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, Editor, Publisher, Angel, Janitor and a "Saint" of the Society, an attendee of over 1500 meetings -- and I wasn't even introduced and invited to say a few words.

'I wanted to remember the dead, to speak the names, at least, of lost pioneers -- Paul Freehafer, E. Everett Evans, Mororo, Ron Ellik, Bob Olsen, Dr. Adolphe de Castro, Joseph William Skidmore, E. Mayne Hull, Henry Kuttner, Arthur K. Barnes, Clara Winger Harris, Henry Hasse, Lora Crozetti, Helen Finn, the late Bill Crawford, Al Mussen (who lost his life on the Death March on Bataan), Henry Eichner, Arthur Louis Joquel, Louise Leipair, Alva Rogers, Lou Goldstone, David McDaniels, Eddie Baker (murdered one midnight coming off the freeway, a few blocks from home, for something like six bucks) ... It was a sad, unsatisfactory occasion for me, insofar as tradition was ignored. I thought back on the 100th meeting in 1940 with the great grout shop showing Doc Smith, Heinlein, Hamilton, Bradbury, Harryhausen, Daugherty, Hodgkins, Crawford, Yerke, Mororo, Squires, myself and so many more (no official shot was taken of the attendees at the 50th Anniversary); even at the time of the 1000th meeting years later there was still some sense of history. On the drive home Wendayne tried to make me understand: "Modern fans just don't give a damn, Forry, about what happened before their time. The past doesn't interest them, it doesn't even exist. The don't care about all the things you think important." Alas. Shed a tear for Old Man Ackerman, 68, one of Methuselah's children who has lived too long and become a stranger amongst a strange band.'

((I have detected a subtle switch in magazines and newspapers to 'Science Fiction' and 'SF' as more and more people come to realize what 'SF' stands for) from "Sci-Fi", since "Sci-Fi" has come to be associated with schlocky sf and low-grade melds of sf, fantasy and horror. The better, big-budget sf movies are being presented as 'Science Fiction' or 'SF', and more

and more movie reviewers are picking up on the class distinctions between 'SF' and 'Sci-Fi'. I understand your personal desire to defend Sci-Fi, which you originated 30-odd years ago, but I think you are losing the war, in the sense I discuss above.

(Yes, you were slighted at the LASFS 50th Anniversary gathering, and tendrils should be lopped off! I hope it was an unfortunate oversight and not a deliberate slight.)



LETTER FROM BUZZ DIXON
8961 Yolanda
Northridge, CA 91324
September 13, 1984

'I assume you've heard all the accolades before but I'll heap them on again: SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW is the best fanzine/semi-prozine/whatever in the field. Hell, I voted for you twice; don't blame me if you didn't get another well-deserved Hugo.

'(Seriously, the Hugos seem to be divided between you, Andy Porter and Charlie Brown. Comparing the three zines is like comparing apples and oranges -- well, maybe more like comparing an apple to a valencia and a navel -- in that all are excellent but different. You three ought to be ashamed of yourselves, hogging the field (as opposed to Hoguing it). Actually, I'm well aware the whole "semi-prozine" category evolved because you and the others routinely blew away all the traditional fanzines.)

'It struck me while at LACON II that there were far fewer fanzines in evidence at this worldcon than at the previous (Noreascon I) worldcon I attended. Thirteen years do make a difference, but I was disappointed to find so few old magazines, old books and old fanzines for sale.

'By "old" I mean something at least ten years old and not currently available in reprint. There were Stephen King and Larry Niven first-editions all over the place, but they're available in paperback too.

'The few old magazines that were available were prohibitively expensive (\$20 for a mid-forties ASTOUNDING!!!) or too current or both.

'Most of the fanzines for sale

in the huckster room (room? Ha! Zeppelin hangar!) were Trek/D&D/STAR WARS fanzines; nothing wrong with that, mind you, but that was virtually all the fanzines (though I did pick up two copies of your REG personalzine).

In the Anaheim Hilton & Towers more traditional fanzines were on sale, but again, far too current for what I was looking for. Next door was the fanzine display room; at least a thousand old fanzines were under clear plastic, including PSYCHOTICS, first-volume SFRs, REGs, and other famed fanzines such as LE ZOMBIE and TRUMPET and Lord knows how many others.

The frustration was that you could only look at the covers, you couldn't pick them up and read them. I can understand why -- these are old and delicate and valuable fanzines -- but still, oh, how my fingers itched to open them up.

I had a good time at the con; lots of events overlapped one another so I wasn't able to do all I wanted to do. I was awakened at 2:00 a.m. Sunday to the sounds of a pair of mundanes trying to beat a fan to death by flailing him about the head and shoulders with a courtesy phone they ripped off the wall. I never got the full story on what happened but I gathered the fan said something to the mundanes that the mundanes took exception to. Hotel security rushed to the scene and quelled the disturbance; con security was right on their heels. Surprisingly, hotel security took the fan's side! I say surprisingly because I've attended cons where the fans were looked down upon and threatened with expulsion from the hotel at the least infraction. I guess having a couple of thousand fans renting rooms and spending hundreds of dollars in the hotel changed management's heart (via way of their pocketbook) and so they were determined to let the fans have a good time.

Speaking of hotel security, it was evident from their ubiquitous presence that yes, indeed, this was 1984. You couldn't cross the lobby without tripping over a half-dozen uniformed (and armed!) security guards; there were almost as many in the convention center across the street.

Well, so much for the con report; let's get on to more urgent and interesting things, such as SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #52.

Bill Minan left out a couple of important details in his review of Dale Pollock's SKYWALKING. First, Dale Pollock couldn't write

an interesting sentence if you held a gun to his genitals, and second, Lucas didn't do well in his film classes because he "broke all the rules" (Pollock's term, implying he found new and original ways of doing things instead of the old, conservative way) but because he sandbagged his classmates. For instance, if the class assignment was to shoot a short scene in black-and-white to demonstrate one's skill at sound editing, Lucas would use color, titles, the whole schmeer to impress his professor.

True, this isn't "cheating," but it is taking unfair advantage of one's classmates who follow instructions. USC (Lucas's alma mater) is notorious for allowing wealthier students to "buy" their way out of trouble by producing ten, fifteen, twenty-thousand dollar student films. UCLA insists all students use university equipment and facilities, thus giving a slightly fairer shake.

(Getting back to LACON II, while there I saw the original short that George Lucas based THX 1138 on; the film that created all the hoopla that lead to him becoming a feature film maker. Lucas' short may have been hot stuff when it was made in the early seventies but it has dated badly. Overall, the current crop of UCLA/USC film makers do much better work.)

Pollock is a bad writer, but there's still a lot of interesting "between the lines" reading in SKYWALKING.

I read the Julian May interview, even though the only work of hers that I've read is "Dune Roller." I can't say I approve (if that's the word) her approach to plotting, but what the hey, if it works for her and her fans ...



What she does in novels is what writers are forced to do in television: Write a detailed outline then not deviate from it. I mean, it works, you get a finished product at the end, but adhering to a formula (sex scene here, violence there, etc.) seems to sap much-needed vitality and spontaneity from the work.

I speak from my own meager experience, of course. I seem to be an intuitive type of writer; I rarely take notes, make a beat outline, draw up character sketches, etc. What I do is to read and think and read and think and then when it's ready to come out, I let it come out. While obviously, for longer pieces I do make a few notes just to keep track of things, I prefer to let things grow in my intellect instead of on paper.

But like I said, whatever works for ya ...

Re Chet Twarog: It is called sunrise because that is what the sun appears to be doing in relation to the viewer. Similarly, they're called movies because the images appear to movie (when we all know they're just a series of still photos flickering by).

Re your comments to F. Paul Wilson and Robert Bloch: "The only alternative is to become powerful enough to be like George Lucas and control everything in your films and make sure boneheads don't screw up your words and vision." The only problem is maintaining perspective and self-critical faculties when one has this power. It's too easy to let sycophants and yes-people dilute personal vision into self-indulgence.

Re Darrell Schweitzer and the lady who couldn't tell her asteroid from a black hole in the ground: A lot of people get their views of science from ... science fiction.

The reason people flock across the border to try quack cancer cures in Mexico is because in SF films and TV Dr. McCoy always comes up with the miracle solution just in time. They buy gypso "energy saving devices" because nobody in SF films worries about such mundane things as fuel. They assume the "Star Wars" defense will protect them (when in actuality all it does is allow enough of our missiles to survive to strike back) because it worked in the movie.

'A few years ago somebody was claiming we really didn't go to the moon at all because you never saw any stars in the sky in the lunar photographs and everybody knows you see stars in the sky when you're on the moon. The problem in explaining this nut's case away is that it involves what appears to the layman to be very complicated terms: F-stop, depth of field, exposure reading, etc. This makes the layman's head hurt and he decides to accept the (deceptively) simpler solution: The moon flights were faked.'

(('accolades' sounds like a new soft drink. But I never tire of being praised. Thank you. I don't often print compliments, but in your case I make an exception.

((The Hugo used to be divided between SFR and LOCUS. Andy's publications won only once--a tie year with SFR. For the past five or six years LOCUS has won the fanzine Hugo and now the semi-pro Hugo. So it goes.

((I was taught to write by Jack Woodford, and Jack Woodford says... (Why is everybody listening?) to make a chapter by chapter outline, make notes as things occur to you for other chapters, and attach those notes in appropriate chapters. Of course as I write a novel plot/outline adjustments have to be made as characters develop and scenes happen which demand changes down the line or up the line.

((The advantages of a detailed outline are that you don't forget vital items/actions/relationships and you present to the editor proof that you know what you're doing, and give him a clear, detailed picture of what the novel will be when you've finished it. Thus our outline for THE BURNED LANDS sold on the basis of the outline alone, with no opening chapters written. However, it was a 29-page outline, and was buttressed by THE SWORD OF ALLAH of which it was a sequel.

((I can see using the 'instinctive' approach to a short story, but a novel.... I'd be afraid of wasting too much time redoing whole sections, writing myself into a black hole, etc.))

((But people were flocking to "quack" cures before science fiction existed, before STAR TREK, in their desperate need for hope and in their terrible fear of death. I'd go to Lourdes, too, if that was my only option. I'd take Laetrile, mega-vitamins, whatever. Why not? I'd even try comedy as a cure. Laugh your way to health! As it is I eat an apple a day. That keeps the doctor away, all right! (Never mind that doctors don't make house calls anymore.)



LETTER FROM KERRY E. DAVIS
Volt Energy Management Services
4700 SW MacAdam Ave, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97201
November 27, 1984

'As I mentioned when last I saw you, I am still interested in hunting up a copy of your REG Newsletter (from a few years ago), #10. So far no luck, so I would like to extend the search to other readers of SFR. I am willing to pay a fair quantity of dollars for an original in good condition. If no one is willing to part with a master, I can part with a substantially reduced amount in return for a photocopy, I suppose. Also persons unknown holding earlier issues of SFR, PSYCHOTIC, ALIEN CRITIC, etc. are welcome to write for offers on single issues or partial or complete collections.'

((Kerry wants me to be the middle man in large-amount transactions. So if a big deal is involved, and a purchase is agreed upon, I will receive the magazines, let Kerry examine them, and will transmit his payment to the seller. But send your initial letters to him!))

LETTER FROM BUZ BUSBY
2852 14th Ave West
Seattle, WA 98119
Nov 3, 1984

'I don't know whether depression glooms onto writers more than onto other people, but I've experienced it -- to the point that a few years ago I'd wake up totally depressed and have to fight my way up out of it, nearly every morning, in order to function at all. No obvious reason; it just happened.

But gradually I seem to have worked loose from that mess; I don't know how, unless you count effort. But it wasn't the bit you cite, of status-striving vs relaxing and enjoying life. At no time did I ever give the status thing much standing room; right after War 2 I decided I'd never get rich so might as well enjoy. I guess I write because I want to; certainly I don't have to. Sure, there are all the usual work-avoidance mechanisms, but when I get hot I will work my ass off, simply because it gets to be fun then.

'Another nice thing about writing is that if you can learn to deal in some parts of that league, it's a real education. Sort of post-grad to being in the army, where one is shot upon by experts. I mean, would you believe that 2-3 months ago a lousy bank thought to have me accept liability for its own error? Not hardly; I'd seen worse in book contracts (though not in recent times), and enjoyed kicking the bank squarely in its fiduciaries, whatever those may be but it sounds reasonably dirty.'

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road
Strafford, PA 19087
Nov 3, 1984

'Janet Fox correctly points out that professional fantasy markets have not exactly blown away the semi-professional magazine. This merely shows the perils of playing prophet. Yet another part of the interview with me was obsolete (in a news sense) before the interview was published. When it was conducted, it seemed that IMAGO was going to have a major impact on the field and that AMAZING would recover faster than it has, and presumably go monthly. Since AMAZING pays 6¢ a word and publishes around three fantasy stories per issue, that would be a major market for fantasy. (It is still as these things go, a major market, but like say, WHISPERS, it can't absorb a large volume of material.)

'You mention that there should be a small but loyal market for an "amateur" fiction magazine. By this I believe we both mean a magazine published on an amateur level, but containing professional quality fiction. But you're engaging in prophecy-by-retrospect. There has been a loyal readership for such magazines since about 1968. The major titles today are WEIRDBOOK, WHISPERS, FANTASY BOOK, FANTASY TALES and perhaps one or

two others. There is a new Canadian semi-professional (or pro-quality/amateur-published) magazine, BORDERLAND, which will be a major title if it sticks around. Of the above-mentioned four, only FANTASY BOOK has been around less than five years. (WEIRDBOOK started 1968; WHISPERS 1973; FANTASY TALES 1977.)

((One issue, Darrell, you will send a short loc and I will fall into shock and be forced to eat a full gallon of pistachio-nut ice cream in order to recover.

((I know I could publish a successful semi-pro science fiction magazine, or series of anthologies, if I wanted to. But it would not be fantasy. It would be science-fiction. And it would be titled BOLD SCIENCE FICTION and it would be open only to professional writers who wanted an outlet for those stories too extreme, too controversial for the existing prozines or magabooks which those authors felt a need to write and see published. There are still taboos and you-can't-say-thats in sf, and there should be an outlet. But I'd have to give up SFR, probably stop my own professional writing. And I don't really feel that strongly about it anymore. Publishing a fiction magazine or series of anthologies is very time consuming.))

'At the same time, it is clear to me that the time is right for a strong, professional fantasy magazine. Perhaps now, for the first time ever, such a magazine could succeed in a big way. Fantasy is now the dominant form of popular fiction in its various forms. I am sure that if IMAGO had actually been published and published competently, it would have succeeded. And let us not forget TWILIGHT ZONE which is a successful, fully-professional fantasy magazine, albeit a specialized one. TZ has the highest circulation of any fantasy magazine in history. It should not be dismissed as a media magazine. It contains about 30,000 words of fiction an issue, from my count of a couple issues.

'If one or more professional fantasy magazines of a more general sort do succeed, then naturally they will draw off material which would otherwise appear in semi-prozines. In my own experience, stories move between the categories quite freely. The bane of a writer's existence is the sale that becomes "unsold" when the magazine folds. I have had professional stories come unsold and then get resold to semi-prozines, and the reverse happens nearly as often.

'Right now the professional



fantasy market consists of two specialized magazines, F&SF and TWILIGHT ZONE and more generally, of various anthologies (usually published by Ace) which appear once or twice a year, AMAZING, THE DRAGON (which uses one story an issue), and on a more marginal level, other gaming magazines. Paul Collins' anthologies publish a little fantasy and there are other stray niches for a story or two. But as a practical matter, the fantasy writer who produces more than two or three stories a year must deal with semi-prozines or go unpublished, no matter how good he or she is. This is why FANTASY BOOK has become the basic workaday magazine in the field, occupying a role comparable to that of say IF and GALAXY in science fiction in the mid-1960s.

'I am aware, of course, that publishing a book or magazine is a far more difficult job than editing it. If you will look at the various defunct magazines Elton Eliott lists, you'll see they all died of publishing failures, not editorial ones. COSMOS was dragged under by other failures within Baronet. It lost some sales because the format was wrong and it tended to get placed with the comic books on the newsstand, but it was, I understand, holding its own until BIZJO lost big bucks. ASIMOV'S ADVENTURE actually was designed to survive in the 8 1/2 X 11" packs next to the comic books, but the perceived audience proved illusory. (Also for some completely insane reason, the publisher refused to sell subscriptions. Again, a publishing decision, not an editorial one.) GALAXY was, bluntly, bled to death by its publisher, but even so

it was such a viable product that it took several years of sustained abuse to kill it. Had Jim Baen been supported by a competent publisher, he could still be editing GALAXY to this day. VERTEX, again, was misconceived. It was glossy and therefore appeared among the general science magazines. For this audience, the magazine contained too much fiction. The VERTEX folks almost invented OMNI before Guccione did. But failure of the magazine had very little to do with what stories the editor bought. Marvel's HAUNT OF HORROR was very well edited and designed, but died because the publisher chickened out and killed it before the returns came in. (It turned out it has sold well.) The death of NEW WORLDS was clearly caused by editorial decisions, but that is the only recent example I can think of and for much of the period in question, it was more of a semi-prozine than a professional magazine on the scale of GALAXY or VERTEX.

'So, yes, publishing is actually the hard part. As you can see from the Scithers AMAZING, it was possible to totally rehabilitate the magazine editorially with a single issue. (November 1982.) When George was able to pay top dollar, he had stories by Larry Niven, Gene Wolfe, Alan Dean Foster and Jack Williamson, and a Michael Whelan cover. (He bought all the contents of his first issue. Inherited inventory stories did not appear until later.) Had those stories gone into an issue of ISAAC ASIMOV'S with that Whelan cover, I'm sure it would have sold 100,000 copies, like any other issue of a Davis magazine. But AMAZING had been mis-published since the early 1950s. It is much harder to overcome that than put good stories beneath a good cover.

'One point Elton misses is that while newsstand exposure is necessary to keep a magazine going, you don't do your serious lauding of a prozine on the newsstand. The way to promote a magazine is to go to the various subscription agencies, sell a bunch of subscriptions and then have a good enough product to make those subscribers renew. Subscription agency discount subscriptions are usually break-even at best. The profits are made on the full-rate renewals. If they don't renew, you're dead. Elton is right that magazine publishing is capital-intensive. You use that capital to keep the magazine going until the renewals come in.

'The circulation figures of the prozines are a matter of public record. If you look at the statements in the magazines, you will discover that the Davis mag-

azines (ASIMOV'S and ANALOG) sell roughly 20,000 copies on the newsstand and have 100,000 subscribers. F&SF sells roughly 15,000 on the newsstand and has 40,000 subscribers. (I am rounding off. I have not actually looked them up as I write this, but I did see a chart of all of them recently.) AMAZING sells 10,000 on the newsstand and has about 1800 subscribers, less than LOCUS and probably less than SF. But you can see that, with print runs only a third the size of those of the other magazines, the newsstand sales aren't really bad.

'It seems to be the popular wisdom now that AMAZING is doomed. Actually, this isn't so. It can still be saved with a subscription push. And the Spielberg TV show will of course help. But the magazine isn't on its last legs, contrary to rumor. We're putting together the mid-1985 issues about now. But as for the future viability of AMAZING, consider this: Steven Spielberg isn't paying for the use of that title for his TV show with peanuts. He has a guaranteed 44 episodes from the network (which, if I recall correctly, is NBC). We can be quite sure that TSR isn't exactly going to fold AMAZING while this money is coming in, and they might even give the magazine the big subscription promotion it needs. The magazine has always been viable. It's just been sitting in idle all this time.

'On a similar note: We would appreciate it if you didn't make public statements that AMAZING is not going to be around much longer. This can only help make that the case by destroying subscriber confidence. Now, someone like Charles Platt is doing it (as in the new SF CHRONICLE) out of his usual malice (you ask why does everyone hate Charles Platt -- because he has worked long and hard to be hated), but we know that you mean no harm. The magazine is still in delicate condition, certainly. It hasn't been promoted seriously since Howard Browne's time. And magazines don't just take off all by themselves. You can be sure that ASIMOV'S was promoted vigorously through direct mail, discount subscription houses and the whole works.

((What I don't understand (and it must be what triggers others' predictions of doom for AMAZING) is why the distributors bother with the magazine. I assume that at some point a major (or the) distributor will say to hell with carrying this low-volume, low profit mag! and AMAZING will be gone. But

these thoughts have been occurring in my mind for years...decades!... and still AMAZING continues. Truly amazing.))

LETTER FROM RONALD L LAMBERT
2350 Virginia
Troy, MI 48083
Nov 12, 1984

'The questions you asked about evil are difficult to answer, of course. As a society, we give tentative, provisional answers to most of them because we must. We have to decide whether a youthful offender should be tried as a juvenile or as an adult, we have to decide whether someone like John W. Hinckley was capable of knowing right from wrong when he committed his crime and whether he is mentally competent to stand trial, we have to make distinctions between first and second degree murder (premeditated and crime-of-passion) and a further distinction involving accidental loss of life because someone was criminally negligent (manslaughter) -- etc. But we do not really know what we are doing. It is a fifty-gallon barrel of worms, and unfortunately we are stuck in the barrel with the worms. All we can do is do the best we can and take heart from the fact that civilization has been advancing in recent ages.

'Liberals try to cope with evil by tacitly denying that it exists. Conservative fundamentalists take the opposite course of condemning as evil everything that makes them nervous. Neither alternative is viable. We have to wade around in the barrel, contending with the worms, because that is where we are. Only God can get us out of the barrel -- which is a good reason for believing in God. God is needed to judge evil in all its complexity. When evil is judged, then we can be freed of it.

((Only God can get us out of the barrel -- which is a good reason for believing in God.' I can't believe you wrote that. How about, 'Only a super, intelligent cockroach can get us out of our moral and social difficulties, which is a good reason to believe in a super, intelligent cockroach.'

((It is my personal belief that when we finally accept ourselves as we are and not as what we 'should' be, we'll be able to judge ourselves and make rules and laws more realistic and workable than at present. We are still too wrapped up in illusions about ourselves to do a really decent job of living-

together ethics. Waiting for a non-existent super cockroach to solve our problems is absurd, and it always has been. It's a cop-out.

((But the above is an idealistic statement; we will not accept ourselves as we really are because it would be too sobering, terrifying, humiliating, ego-crushing to do so for too many of us. What was, what is, will be.))

'I see that now Damon Knight has called me a frog. What he meant by that I am not sure. I am not French. It is true that when I was in college I sung in a men's glee club directed by a man named Norman Krogstad, and we were fond of calling ourselves "Krog's Frogs," but Knight surely could not have known about that. Well, whatever he meant by calling his critics frogs, I appear to be in good company.

((Maybe he simply wants you to croak?))

'I wonder if Knight is as comfortable knowing that his opposition to what he terms "the L-5 moonoggle" has placed him in the company of such luminaries as Lynden LaRouche and Senator William Proxmire. If Knight is going to prefer to the far-sighted dream of the L-5 Society as a "moonoggle," then I am going to call Knight a "proxmire-monger."

'As for the debate with Gregory Benford, I have to say that I can see Knight's point. Concluding that hard SF is the core of the genre is the result of reasoning from a false analogy. Science fiction is not a peach, with a hard pit in the middle; it is a strawberry with a lot of little seeds sprinkled on the outside. Hard SF cannot be the core of SF because the genre did not grow that way.

'Perhaps it would be useful to term SF epistemological fiction. What we know about the nature of reality provides the ideas that we play with in SF. Science fiction that heavily emphasizes its close conformity to conventional, "approved" knowledge about the nature of reality is "hard" SF. Some SF does this in such great detail that only people with doctorates in physics can write it. That of course is all right. There is a place for even "superhard" SF -- but it is at the periphery of the genre, not the core. The first writers of SF were not physicists. For the most part, the physicists did not come along until the present gen-

eration. It takes real effrontery for them to presume they are the core of the genre.

'Do not get me wrong -- I am glad the physicists have come. I personally prefer hard SF. But I object to the notion that hard SF should define the field in any sense. Science fiction is literature that plays with ideas about the nature of reality, and the modern philosophy of science is only one philosophy among many, none of which have been proven or disproven. How "kosher" the ideas we play with in writing SF may seem to physicists does not have any relevance to whether a story is science fiction. Physicists are not the final authority. Physics is not Truth. The modern physical paradigm has weaknesses -- even areas of glaring contradiction with observed phenomena relating to such basic things as the essential nature of matter. So if someone wants to bring in angels and devils, psi and witchcraft, ghosts and astral bodies, there is room for it -- in science fiction! We can all think of examples where such elements have been incorporated into good SF stories. Very few people would have the gall to suggest that Philip K. Dick's novel VALIS was not science fiction.

'The difference between fantasy and science fiction is this: In fantasy the writer says, "I know this is not, could not ever, possibly be true, but let's pretend." In science fiction the writer says, "This might somehow, sometime, possibly be true." Whether physicists think it could possibly be true is irrelevant. They do not really know, and even if they did, and were omniscient, they still did not invent the genre, and certainly no one is going to let them rule it. (The Secret Masters of SF-dom would object.)'

((It's all in the names of things: telepathy can be a science fiction element or story theme, and if you make telepathy possible by a headset full of electronics, that's even better. But if you make telepathy possible by means of a magic ring or sword or an enchantment or spell...ah, that's fantasy.))



LETTER FROM ALAN DEAN FOSTER
THRANX, INC.
4001 Pleasant Valley Dr.
Prescott, AZ 86301
Nov 12, 1984

'Yo ho ho and a barrel of Big Brothers. The USIA plans to establish a kind of visual Voice of America to be carried by anywhere from four to six satellites scattered around the world. Each satellite would broadcast to a specified region. There'll be one for Africa, one for the Middle East, and so forth. The complete system will be called WORLDNET. This is going to be fun, especially if the satellite signals are strong enough to qualify as DBS quality. That means anyone with a cheap receiver and a one-meter dish will be able to pick them up. Going to drive certain governments crackers.

'Satellite broadcasting is already changing the way much of the world receives its information. The magazine I subscribe to is full of letters from dish owners in places like Caracas and Barbados asking how to refine their reception of HBO and, particularly, SIN (the U.S. Spanish-language net). Dish owners with proper equipment on the East Coast had a fine time earlier this year watching the Friendship Games in Moscow (their consolation Olympics for East Bloc athletes), even though no U.S. network or independent stations carried the broadcasts. The dish owners picked up the signal off the Soviet GOROZONT satellite.

((Currently, here in Oregon, the movie companies are suing some motels who get HBO, SHOWTIME, etc. "free" via dishes. Copyright infringement or something is the basis for the suits. The defense is, I suppose, that if the movie companies don't want their movies received by anyone with a dish, they should prevail upon the lessors of the satellite transponders involved to scramble their signals, so that only cable companies could unscramble the signals.

((There must be a reason why HBO, Showtime, etc. do not do this already. Technical problems? Costs? Would it be too easy to buy descramblers?))

'Odd, but the day SFR came in the mail, one of our cats passed away. This paragon of feline virtue was named Dusty, age fifteen. Been with my wife all her adult life. Dusty had been slimming down for years, but retained her appetite right up until the last day. Then she just stretched out on her favorite rug and went away. Never even closed her eyes.

'Most cats will try to go outside, as yours did, or at the least find a dark place. This is because they possess an innate dignity denied most humans. Cats think, I believe, that dying is a private matter best left to themselves. They dislike inflicting pain and suffering on their friends and so when the time comes, they try to slip away so that their actual passing will not be an imposition on anyone they know, whether humans or other cats. Admirable.

((Thank you and all the dozen or so others who wrote to express sympathy at Kookie's death, and to tell similar stories of the passing of a cat or cats they knew and loved. But it doesn't help a bit; it just dredges up memories of her and that in turn brings a sting of tears to my nose. But, still, thanks.))

'The 1988 Republican presidential nominee will be Senator Robert Dole of Kansas. The vice-presidential nominee will be his wife, Secretary Elizabeth Dole. You read it here first.

'You said none of the Democratic presidential candidates had any guts. One did, but he wasn't a serious candidate this year. Congressman (just won re-election with over 80% of the votes cast) from Arizona named Morris Udall. Even the Republicans admit he'd make a good president. So why doesn't he run again? He's had Parkinson's Disease for years and it doesn't look good on TV. Sad. Just like Terry-Thomas, the wonderful English comic actor. It's a disease that just makes people drop out of sight.

'You're right about the crud on network TV, but if you're not watching Rumpole of the Bailey on PBS on Friday nights you're missing a treat.

'You also ought to subscribe to THE ECONOMIST, the world's best news magazine.'

((I should subscribe to a lot of magazines, and newspapers, but I can't afford them in the first place, and haven't the time to read them in the second place. That's the major frustration of my life: not enough time to learn enough to know what's really the truth in several areas. The more you know, and learn, the more you need to know... Maybe living happily in this time of incredibly available knowledge is achieved by knowing when to stop learning...or how best to ration one's time. I know what to not to investigate... I don't know! So much interests me!))

LETTER FROM PETER PINTO
80 Eastham St, Lancaster
LA1 5AY United Kingdom
Dec. 1984

"Alien Thoughts" is almost the only absorbing writing in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW -- interviews and soap-box articles aside -- most of the middling-sized reviews not displaying much character ('nastiness?'), but impersonal pseudo objectivity. Or maybe not. How do you see the change(s) in your organ over the years? Could it be just that your guestreviewers feel inhibited from burling with enthusiasm/manic attacks with the scalpel? (Not necessarily a plea to bring back Alter.) You've doubtless been following the continuing misadventures of the U.S. overseas, the search for Reagan's brain, etc., but have you wondered what -- or who -- may now be occupying the caverns behind the face of a certain ex-B movie actor? Have you noted the tendency of this worthy to find fluent, colloquial and grammatical English, not to mention negotiating the real world, just a little too taxing? As though unfamiliar with his body? Shudder... Alter is safer in print.

'As to economics -- your position is no doubt excellent to comment on the internal effects of Reaganomics (which seem to bear as little resemblance to Reaganspeak as have Thatcher's policies to monetarism), but the effect on the outside world isn't just disastrous -- it's catastrophic. The paranoid urge to control every last detail of everyone's actions no matter how far away is expensive when indulged in uncontrollably. It soaks up available cash at increasingly high interest rates, driving first the third world and latterly the majority of developed economies into recession and then depression, destabilizes popular governments (I hesitate to use the empty adjective, "democratic") and abandons the role of economic locomotive to world capitalism that the system requires to counteract its built-in tendency to deflation and depression.

'Over here things are not too bad -- the dalek that thinks it's divine has been promising that things'll get worse for all but the very richest, that all remaining industry will be destroyed (she has destroyed more of Britain's industry than Hitler and Goering, financed by Morgan, were able to), and that, if necessary to ensure her re-election, another war will be fought (whether against the miners, Tory party "wets" -- traditionalists, civil servants, gays or a handy, small

nation, she is apparently undecided. Taking all precaution, the IRA has accordingly served warning that they will be a dangerous enemy to take on by blowing up the Tory party conference ... unfortunately, they missed!). Police powers are being increased, and the vestiges of civilian control of the police abolished.

'Elisbeth Lindner at Methuen (11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE) has been expanding the Methuen Paperback SF/Fantasy list slowly but steadily -- with advice, suggestions and interference by yours truly. I think she'll soon need to start planning to originate SF -- she remains unconvinced -- Methuen looks for authors to build into names recognized in Britain, or to re-build: Accordingly, a reasonable body of work/evidence of the ability to produce entertaining fiction worth keeping in print for the ideas (and their treatment) underlying the story are looked for. Major names on the list are: C.J. Cherryh (from DAW), Ben Bova, Peter Tremayne & Gillian Bradshaw and, in the re-establishing slot: Philip K. Dick & Clifford Simak. If anyone can advise on the whereabouts of Thomas J. Bassler or his agent, it will be appreciated: We recently reissued THE GODMALE and published the first ukpb of HALF PAST HUMAN and I know only of the up IF-published stories else, by him. From 1985 we'll be looking to rebuild Roger Zelazny's list in the UK (we share him with Sphere, who have the Amber series plus EYE OF CAT) and finally doing our own paperbackbacks of Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast trilogy, the pb rights having finally reverted to us.

'Trust your campaign to reduce your printrun back down to official fanzine status level isn't intended to work through Product Degradation -- basically, more Geis is probably what's wanted -- less filmviews unless interesting.'

LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS
Box #25771
Albuquerque, NM 87125
September, 1984

'Somewhere along the line you mentioned (in a letter) that there are too many awards being given in the SF/Fantasy field. I agree, but everybody has their favorite so here's a plug for mine.

'The Prometheus Award is given by the Libertarian Futurist Society (c/o Victoria Varga, 121 McKinley St., Rochester, NY 14609) and I think all SFR readers should join

IF ARGENTINA
WERE A BASEBALL
TEAM, WE'D BE
OWNED BY GEORGE
STEINBRENNER.



immediately. The original Prometheus Committee was started in 1978, lapsed into limbo for awhile, and was resurrected in 1982 as the LFS to honor and promote the best libertarian fiction each year. In theory it's not limited to SF, but in practice every winner so far (and most of the works nominated) are SF. The winners to date: WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS by F. Paul Wilson in 1978, THE PROBABILITY BROACH by L. Neil Smith in 1982, VOYAGE FROM YESTERYEAR by James P. Hogan in 1983 and THE RAINBOW CADENZA by J. Neil Schulman in 1984.

'The LFS also started a Hall of Fame award for libertarian classics in 1983. The winners for 1983 were Rand's ATLAS SHRUGGED and Heinlein's THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS and the 1984 winners were Orwell's 1984 and Bradbury's FAHRENHEIT 451. Personally, I voted for 1984 and Le Guin's THE DISPOSSESSED, which seemed a more balanced selection but you can't have everything.

'Your readers may also be interested to know that I've nominated THE SWORD OF ALLAH by "Richard Elliott" for the 1985 Prometheus. It's an excellent novel with at least a tangential libertarian slant and I'm looking forward to the sequel which I hope will be even libertarian.

((Well, we thank you for the nomination. There is a storyline in ALLAH which involves survivalists and the libertarian philosophy. But the sequel, while exciting and gripping and marvelously well-written, does not have a direct libertarian storyline or message.

((As a matter of fact, THE BURNT LANDS may not even be a sequel to THE SWORD OF ALLAH; it all depends on how well ALLAH sold, and we won't know that until February. The editor of Fawcett will then decide whether to publish THE BURNT LANDS as a sequel, or to ask for some minor re-writing and editing to divorce the novel from ALLAH and publish it as an independent after-a-disaster novel in the near-future. In any case the publication date for THE BURNT LANDS is (as of now) October, 1985.))

LETTER FROM ROBERT A.W. LOWMEDES
717 Willow Avenue
Hoboken, NJ 07030
Nov 13, 1984

'To Avram Davidson: You are 100% correct about Richard Dix in TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL, which I saw probably before Damon Knight started seeing science fiction movies. There was indeed that door-closing scene you refer to; what I remember better is that there were cameo scenes for George Arliss (as prime minister of Britain, of course), and Walter Huston, as President of the United States. The scene in METROPOLIS, which I first saw in 1927 (and which scared me then) was somewhat similar, but not enough to justify confusing the two.

'I also remember William "Stage" Boyd, as differentiated from the William Boyd who later became Hopalong Cassidy. I recall the first as the murderer in the William Powell version of THE BENSON MURDER CASE, and the latter in a film (title forgotten) wherein he is a playboy whose family has shoved him into the Army; after various mishaps, he Proves Himself and gets a commission as an officer.

'The title of the film Damon disliked so much, based on THE ISLE OF DOCTOR MOREAU, with Charles Laughton as Moreau, is THE ISLE OF LOST SOULS. That too I saw when it first came out, circa 1933, and enjoyed it heartily. A few years ago, when the Burt Lancaster version of THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU came out, Cinema Village in New York was inspired to run both films on the same program. I was interested and hid myself there, to walk in on the middle of the color new version. I considered it a mess. Then on the screen came the old black-and-white Laughton film, in soft-focus, also with Bela Lugosi as the Sayer of the Law -- and I was enchanted all over again. I walked out at the end of that one, not wanting to see any more hard-color version of the remake -- which, from what I saw of the last half was no closer to Wells's novel (which I've reread with pleasure within the last few years) than the Laughton version. The old film did not show you too much explicitly, but it set up a mood and your imagination filled it out. The remake left nothing to the imagination at all! That is one of the various reasons why I refuse to go to current science fiction or fantasy films.

'And I do indeed remember, and would gladly see again the old THINGS TO COME, and the delightful Roland Young version of THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES.

'I didn't see the particular William "Stage" Boyd film that might have involved zombies, but I still remember the Bela Lugosi WHITE ZOMBIE, which did indeed. Again, a weird film with just enough explicit to give one a shudder, but full of things for your imagination to fill out.

'Hmm, you can get a mint julep in Milford? I go there several times a year, but at none of the restaurants Virginia Kidd frequents can they provide one.* Actually, I think I've had a mint julep once in my life and recall more or less liking it. I'd like to try it again, but keep wondering if I'll care for it now. (I must confess, I never think of it at restaurants here in the NY-NJ area. Which must go to show that it really is not all that important to me.)'

* No fresh mint on hand, they say.

TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER, EARTHLING.
TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER, EARTHLING.
TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER, EARTHLING.

OH, WHY DIDN'T I
BECOME AN
ACTOR LIKE
MOTHER
WANTED?



CARD FROM ROBERT BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046
Nov 9, 1984

'I know how you feel about Kookie. The death of three dogs in 20 years caused my wife to avoid a repetition of trauma by getting a Himalayan cat instead; soon it was joined by a Singapura -- and now the two little guys are running the house as well as helping me type, hiding in my file-cabinets, and forming a menage-au-quatorze by sharing our bed. You can't win. They are as innocent and lovable as neofans. Incidentally, tell those film neofans Knight and Davidson that I recently shared a panel with Curt Siodmak, creator of TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL, and that MAD LOVE (1935) dealt with hands transplanted or grafted from a knife-thrower, not a strangler, and that the METROPOLIS EPISODE involved Joh Frederson and his son Freder: Rotwang was the villain.'

CARD FROM GENE WOLFE
Box #69, Barrington, IL 60010
Nov 14, 1984

'Gene DeWeese mentions a book he calls HOW TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS FROM WOMBATS on page 17 of SFR #53. I think he's confusing two Cuppy titles: HOW TO ATTRACT THE WOMBAT and HOW TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS FROM THE APES. Both are excellent books and much easier to find than my own favorite, HOW TO BE A HERMIT. I believe WOMBAT is still in print from Dover. APES has been published with HOW TO BECOME EXTINCT under the omnibus title THE GREAT BUSTARD AND OTHER PEOPLE, but I don't know whether it's still available outside the used book stores.'

CARD FROM LEE DOROSHCHENKO
4S Johnson Rd
West Orange, NJ 07052
Nov 13, 1984

'Re: SFR #53, page 49, column 3:

'In his otherwise incisive "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale: The Phil Dick Problem: The Phil Dick Solution," Barry Malzberg writes, "...one thinks of Willy Loman on his deathbed clutching Jack Burden's hand in ALL THE KING'S MEN..." As every highschooler knows, Willy Loman was the title character of Arthur Miller's DEATH OF A SALESMAN; Willie Stark was the protagonist of ALL THE KING'S MEN.'

LETTER FROM DEAN R. LAMBE
8 Northlake Drive, Route #1
Box 218-S, Vincent, OH 45784
Nov 9, 1984

'Congratulations, you managed to raise my blood pressure at several points in SFR #53, something that SFR hasn't done to me in quite a while. But first, a comment on your comments about topless/bottomless joints (still very much absent from this part of the Middle West, I assure you). Some time ago, Don Kingsbury told me about the painful transitions in Montreal as a result of the Quebecois take-over, wherein French -- and only French -- suddenly became the only language for everything. As a result, a lot of flesh parlors of various sorts and levels of raunchiness opened, and became the only employment opportunities for middle-class, English-speaking young women, who might otherwise have gone into more traditional occupations as secretaries, nurses, teachers, etc. Now, run that forward a bit, with society in general more computerized, more

robotized, more and more low-level, "service industry" jobs as the only jobs. Means more flesh palaces, right, for what else is that surplus labor force to do? De-criminalized prostitution in 20 years? Wanna bet?

((You may be right. If low-pay service industry jobs predominate, that means a shrinkage of the middle-class... an increase in the lower class... Legalized prostitutes would have to sell most of their services to lower class males... in what environment?--brothels, from the street or from bars/taverns, or by means of advertising for personal visits?

((The most beautiful, most intelligent, most skilled girls would go for the upper and middle-class trade (except that middle-class prostitutes would have a lock of that trade, one would think.

((But 20 years probably will not see legalization of prostitution on a federal level. Maybe individual counties or states or cities would try it.))

'Onward to the bitches: While I have great respect for Algis Budrys, I thought you gave entirely too much space to his typical "look, ma, no paper" response to computerization. A hell of a lot of us have been through that now, and it's really only interesting the first three times you read someone else's version. Besides, Budrys advocates a very idiosyncratic el-cheapo system, and I would dismiss his advice to the young out of hand, were it not that one of our best, C.J. Cherryh, churns out her prodigious copy on a similar primitive system. Each to his own goo, as they say in Montreal. Budrys did make a terrible mistake in his choice of printer, however. NOTE TO NEW WRITERS: Never leave the shop with a printer that you haven't seen, with your very own optic sensors, underlining text when hooked up to your very own computer.

'Elton Elliott's raised hackles missed a couple of recent deaths: FTL MAGAZINE and ORION'S CHILD. Sigh.

'Speaking of hackles, though, you really blew my circuits with your mini-review of THE BLOOD OF OTHERS. Ah, c'mon, Dick! "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" Holy hemorrhoids, that's totally gratuitous bigotry, and you damn well know it. Even if the intent of that meager made-for-HBO movie was as you suggest (which I very

much doubt), what is so wrong with frequent reminders of the Holocaust to our current a-historical crop of youth? Your totally unnecessary comment is the sort of thing one might expect for a Lyndon Larouche, but I'm most disappointed to see it falling from your fingers. After all, millions of non-Jews were included in that terrible toll, including not a few of the "unfit handicapped," and I hardly think that historical dramas on the tube constitute a conspiracy. Even if an "International Zionist Conspiracy" exists, it would seem less questionable than the "International Irish Conspiracy" that continues to supply weapons to that tragic island. Would you perhaps care to re-think those lines, or at least explain who, if not the Israelis, you would have the U.S. subsidize in that region?

((Of course we shouldn't forget the Nazi era and its sins, but there is a pattern of constant media reminders of the Holocaust which raise my hackles because of the manipulation it implies. There is a strong Zionist/Jewish influence in the TV industry and it does virtually dictate that every few months there will be presented to the American people a film or documentary about the Nazis and their program of genocide against the Jews. I would resent equally a constant, calculated force-feeding of reminders of the slaughters and genocide of the Indians by the whites in this country.

((We are reminded of the Holocaust so often because the Israeli government is in constant need of subsidies from the American government, and these reminders are to keep the taxpayers in line with guilt and sympathy.

((I note that HBO (if I remember correctly) has yet another Nazi/Holocaust film on its schedule, to be shown soon.

((Who else would I have the US subsidize in the near-east? Nobody.

CAT HOUSE INDEED! THIS, SHERIFF, IS A HIGH CLASS FORNICATORIUM!



I'm an unreconstructed isolationist at heart: I think the US should be neutral and not attempt to build or maintain an empire. I think we should be so strong militarily that we could not be defeated or attacked with any success. We should keep the dollar at a reliable, steady value, be the Switzerland of the world, trade with anybody, never take sides.

((But that is an "old-fashioned" attitude and not liked by the pressure groups and industries who feed on this country and who have a vested interest in interventionism and "protecting American interests" (their interests) overseas.))

'Finally got a copy of THE SWORD OF ALLAH. Little heavy on the rocky-fellow conspiracy, but very nice in the technical gimmicks. As I'm sure you know, the real hidey-hole for the fedgov fatcats is in the wilds of West Virginia, not Oregon (and I'm not sure that Oregon survivalists would have given up that easily).

'Speaking of Rockefeller's, I think you'd worry less about that family if you'd seen close-hand, the clown act of John Jay the IV in West Virginia. By dint of \$7 million of his own and about \$3 million of other peoples', Jay Rockefeller is now the junior Senator from that land of impoverishment. The race was close, despite his Republican competition's total lack of political experience, because of the Ray Gun Zap, and because of the recognition by West Virginians that he really hadn't done much for them in his two terms as Governor, that he really wasn't a "good ol' boy" after all. Naturally, he was replaced as Governor by a prior occupant of that seat, a true local talent who was indicted for extortion the last time that he was in office. Jay Rockefeller in any event, is now a harmless member of the country club, and his further aspirations are silly, for Americans will never elect anyone by that name to the presidency.'

LETTER FROM JESS E. STEWART
POB #55085, Seattle, WA 98155
November 4, 1984

'Appalled by what Budrys (don't let him get away with it!) wrote on page 27, Winter Edition of SFR:

"...as bad as any Jack Woodford novel ever written..."

'There are several ways of looking at that.

'What, if any JW novel has Budrys ever read? Let him look at the publisher. The only untinkered-with, unadulterated novels ever done by JW were those Godwin hard-bound books of the thirties plus a few Panurge Press books. The Woodford Press, the Avon reprints and all other paperback publishers of his novels had half the contents excised by Communist assholes who took out his political philosophies and polemics. These Godwin and Panurge books have been rarely if ever found in bookstores today and therefore a reader not familiar with Jack Woodford's fiction cannot and will not be able to satisfy himself that Woodford can't write fiction ...he must take the word of a so-called authority.

'Fine:

'IF BUDRYS IS AN AUTHORITY ON JACK WOODFORD FICTION LET HIM LIST THE NOVELS OF JACK WOODFORD THAT HE HAS READ, WHERE HE GOT THEM, WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THEM, HOW THEY CAN BE USED AS A COMPARISON OF ANYTHING GREAT SF WRITER R.A. HEINLEIN HAS WRITTEN. IF BUDRYS HAS HAD NO EXPERIENCE READING JW FICTION ... GEIS, FOR CRISAKES TELL HIM TO SHUT THE FUCK UP!

'I say this with all humility because after a man has been wounded virtually to his death nationally by all kinds of political fuck-in-gasholes he ought to be left in his grave peacefully. Republican dirty tricks kind of thing is always to pick on someone who can't defend himself, especially one who is dead.

'Recall lately, the last few years, a great documented account of THE DAY OF INFAMY by Toland. Here he proves that FDR deliberately let us fall into the clutches of the Japanese to make us go to war by sacrificing our navy.

'One point never covered in that book was that FDR had once served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy under Wilson, I think. Billy Mitchell went to see FDR in the late thirties to try to talk him out of navy appropriations into making a giant air force. Bill saw on FDR's desk all kinds of miniature ships, naval weapons, maritime items ... but no miniature airplanes ... FDR told Billy he

was tired of hearing about air power and would do nothing for making an air force since after all our first line of defense is the battleship ... Thus when the war started we had no air force. (Besides, all military advisors to FDR felt the same way.) If FDR had listened to Billy, scrapped plans for carriers, started building all kinds of long-range planes that didn't need a naval deck to land on ... the long-range Mustang, for example, we wouldn't have lost some 30,000 planes over Germany and 170,000 men. The P-51 wiped the German fighters out of the skies over Europe but they came only in 1944. FDR never understood air power and that was his great crime. But it was also the great crime of all the military then. And it further is the great crime of the present administration which has no understanding of air power. Naval lobbyists in Washington D.C. have convinced that dummy in the Whitehouse that 10-billion-dollar aircraft carriers do something for us militarily. They were obsolete in WW II and they are obsolete now. What is needed is the global airplane that needs no place to land ... can fly faster than anything else in space and can deliver the weapons on target anywhere, anytime, any place.

'No navy man would give up his navy to get us into war. But a man with no military vision might get us into a hell of a lot of trouble because he didn't know that air power is all ... ALL. Think of that lowbrow in the Whitehouse who says schools don't need libraries, because his never had any and look where he climbed, and him turning out 10-billion-dollar aircraft carriers.

'Take another look at JW's fiction. His great power in fiction is his satire. One short story of his which would go over big now due to FOULWELL, is "Evangelical Cockroach" which is hysterically funny. Maybe Jack Woodford never came up for a Nobel prize but the thing about him was he WAS A REAL WRITER! (Again, no college boy read his novels -- gals read them -- "me and my old bags" was his usual remark.)

((You manage to recreate Jack's style and manner of attack very well. And your defense of Jack is well-taken; most of his novels were ripped and raped after the thirties.))



LETTER FROM JOEL ROSENBERG
1477 Chapel Apt. B-4
New Haven, CT 06511
December, 1984

'While I enjoyed the interview with Algis Budrys, methinks his article on how to buy a wordprocessor is more of a symptom of a common psychological failing than anything else. Despite the scattering of factual inaccuracies, I think the main problem with the article comes from the natural tendency we all have to rationalize a major decision as the right one. I'm not sure what Budrys' system costs, but I've seen decent wordprocessing packages based on Kaypro computers and daisy-wheel printers for less than \$2000, including software; and the Kaypro is a good system, not a toy. (And no, it's not what I use -- I have Xerox 820-II, which I'm renting for a ridiculously small amount of money. Special circumstances.)

'For those interested in getting into wordprocessing, I'd recommend Pournelle's USER'S GUIDE or his BYTE columns.

'Speaking of Pournelle, I find myself having to agree with him about Edd, Kaplan and Kahn. Uncomfortable; I'm a yellow-dog Democrat.

'Karl Edd should understand that there's a difference between a thought experiment and a sneaky form of advocacy. Unless I've horribly misunderstood Kahn -- which I haven't -- his Doomsday Machine notion was a *reductio ad absurdum* attack on an early version of Mutual Assured Destruction, not an advocacy of building a doomsday bomb. Saying, "If you were to carry MAD to its logical conclusion you would build and then announce that you had built one stationary, relatively-cheap worldwrecker bomb instead of many and varied and expensive bombs and missiles" is not the same thing as saying "Gee, folks, let's build a great big bomb."

'If Edd was fooled simply because Kaplan blurred the distinction in WIZARDS OF ARMAGEDDON (if he did; I haven't read Kaplan's book), then Edd's too easily taken in to be a responsible reviewer. If on the other hand, Edd is too stubborn to see the difference, that's his right; if he's not able to, perhaps you should consider replacing him as a reviewer.

'On to Janet Fox's letter ... I've got to admit that it gave me a chuckle to see Darrell Schweitzer accused of being a computerphile. Now, I know Darrell -- matter of fact, we're collaborating on WRITING FANTASY FICTION, which we've just sold to NAL (adv.) -- and I

know that he hides himself on getting decent copy out of the cruddiest, cheapest old manual typewriters that there are.

But he's also sensible enough to acknowledge that wordprocessors are important tools and to realize -- unlike all too many weirdies out there -- that for a writer to use a typewriter or pen and paper or quill pen doesn't confer virtue.

((I'm often bemused by the costs imposed by progress. Take this Selectric, for instance: it cost \$875 new eight or nine years ago, and has required over one hundred dollars per year every year for a service contract. The advantages are type selection, and the correction feature. Saves a lot of time.

But, a good Olympia manual costing hundreds less, using less expensive ribbons, not requiring a service contract, could have served me just as well. And I would be maybe two thousand dollars richer now.

((I tend to think that all that is really important in communication is ease of understanding/reading, and a good pica typewriter (manual) is as good as a fancy electronic machine for anyone but a snob and anyone who doesn't sell everything he writes.

((I think SFR, for instance, typed on stencils, mimeographed, would have had the same success as SFR offset and professionally printed. Maybe more success. It would have involved a lot more work for me, but I've noticed that 'labor-saving' machines and services only allow me to be less selective in my leisure time---i.e., I watch more junk and crap, and read more junk and crap. I save more time and waste more time. And it costs more money to save that wasted time. Marvelous what progress has done for me. I can't afford to buy a computer and word processing equipment---it would result in mindrot and utter sloth beyond my wildest fears.))

LETTER FROM JACK WILLIAMSON
Box #761, Portales, NM 88130
Nov 12, 1984

'I was glad to read Algis Budrys on the delights of word processing. I would agree heartily that nearly any system is far better than a typewriter. If you think your readers are interested, I might add a comment out of my own experience.

'I brought a TRS-80 Model I back in 1980, modified for lower case and double density. With two disk drives and an NEC 5530 printer, the system cost around \$5,000 -- more than half of it for the NEC 5530 Spinwriter printer, which turns out Selectric-quality copy

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at 55 characters a second. Today an equivalent system could be bought for a fraction of that. The memory held only 48 K, but that was enough to hold the Scriptit system and 5,000 words of copy, an average short story or a chapter of a novel. It served well for four years, turning out several books and a lot of correspondence.

'I even wrote BASIC programs to do a few astronomical computations -- for the surface gravities of asteroids, orbital periods of satellites, flight times between planets at uniform accelerations, etc. Word processing doesn't require you to know BASIC, or in fact much of anything about computers, but the basics of BASIC are easy to learn and the results can be fascinating as well as sometimes useful.

'This summer I changed systems, buying a Tandy 2000 with 256 K of memory. Not because of any trouble with the old one. Having no moving parts, the electronic guts of a computer don't wear out. I wanted a more readable monitor, and I'd been bewitched by all the reviews of wonderful new machines and powerful new software. It cost nearly \$3,000, for more capacity and speed than I'll probably ever need. It does work beautifully, however, and it's also a fascinating toy.

'Instead of the Scriptit, I now have FinalWord. A far more powerful and sophisticated system, a good bit better, I think, than the better-known Wordstar. Like Wordstar, it has all sorts of features I don't need. For instance, it can do footnotes. That would be great for a dissertation, but I hope never to do another dissertation.

'I haven't learned all about it yet, and sometimes it annoys me. When I wanted to print a letter with Scriptit, I hit "P" and the printer started. FinalWord buzzes and repeats stupid questions for several seconds before it consents to print anything.

'Yet it does have features that make it vastly better. For

example, an undelete key and even an automatic save, so that nothing is lost if the power goes off. A window feature makes it easy to move text from one file to another, something that took a whole series of complex steps with Scriptit. I enjoy it more all the time.

'As Algis says, no computer system is ever perfect, but I think any word processor is so much better than a typewriter that comparing them is almost pointless. It's also true that every year or so you can buy twice the power for no more money. Waiting for next year, I might have made a far better deal, but I'm happy now with what I have -- and still looking for simple software I can use with it to keep business records.

'I'm not into games. Writing a new novel is always fun enough, and the computer makes it a lot more fun. The best feature is the ease of revision. Though the first few years, I sent most copy out in first-draft. I didn't, in fact, know how to revise. Now, however, rewriting has now become a habit that can cripple production. The word processor saves retyping the same paragraph again and again in experiments to see if a few changed words will make it better.

'I always enjoy SFR. Keep it going!'

LETTER FROM JANRAE FRANK
8033 Sunset Blvd., #320
Los Angeles, CA 90046
Nov 13, 1984

'About Donning: Hank's line at Donning was one of the only ones making money. The real problem there was that Bob Friedman is a well-meaning person not well grounded in publishing reality. He edited a line of metaphysical books, none of which sold well at all (several titles only sold six books apiece!) -- which drained the profits from the other divisions). They ran into problems with their printer who put them on a budget. Which was fairly close to what happened with Leisure Books. Hank was the highest-paid of their three editors, so when the crunch came they saw that Kay Reynolds, who worked for less, might be fairly interchangeable with Hank, both being SF/F people. And you know where it went from there. In addition to letting Hank go as further belt-tightening, they cancelled the metaphysical line entirely -- but apparently it was far too late to save the book divisions. They are currently phasing out the entire publicity department and have released the marketing director

whose position is being eliminated. As far as I know Donning/Starblaze intends to go on publishing books, but on a severely limited basis.'

((The letter following is typed on Delegate instead of the usual smaller Adjutant, because the Adjutant element's spring sprung--sproing! And getting a new one will be a few days away and I want to get this last letter typed and ready for paste-up. Have I over-explained this?))

RICHMAN G. LEWIN, PRESIDENT
MICRO INFORMATION CONCEPTS
P.O. Box 2163
Dallas, TX 75221

'I could not help but pay attention to the Small Press Note about Libertarian Microfiche, published in your Winter, 1984 issue (p.29).

The first sentence--"It's hard to understand why microfiche doesn't catch on"---seems valid on the surface but is not true. More correct would be the question of why has microfiche taken so long to catch on?

'In a day and age when people buy computers and VCR's, does it make sense that the cost of a reasonable microfiche reader (\$140) stops people from using it? I don't think so. There are actually several reasons, if not events, that have kept microfiche from being more generally accepted by the public. In fact the history of micro publishing almost reads like a science fiction story. Consider this:

'Micro photography was invented between 1839 to 1859 in Great Britain but was considered a novelty until the 1920's. Easy to use, inexpensive, high quality readers were not developed until the early 1970's---more than

a hundred years later. To further complicate matters, it has only been recently that the general public has accepted the concept of "small" as having value. (Many factors contribute to this "new" attitude from the dawning of the Space Age to costs of gasoline.)

'You see, in the light of the above, microfiche has only recently become practical and is just beginning to "catch on". Eventually it will become the "new paperback" of the publishing industry, because of space, weight and cost savings.

'The day is here. Millions of microfiche publications are available, including some science fiction. Readers even exist that allow you to lie in bed and project pages of a book on the ceiling. And costs?--Microfiche itself is so inexpensive that the savings from buying twenty books in microfiche instead of paper, make a microfiche reader "free". Quality?--Today microfiche can be produced better than the original. And enjoyment?--Not only is it fun to use, but it becomes addicting.'

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THREADS (WTBS-TV)

Written by Barry Hines

This 1984 movie, starring Reece Dinsdale and Karen Meagher, follows two families in Sheffield, England, as a conflict develops between Russia and the USA in Iran. Push comes to shove and inevitably a nuclear war starts.

England takes many, many hits, and one of them is an air base 17 miles from Sheffield.

This film is devastating, chilling, terrifying, sobering, agonizing. It does two things: it tells you there is nowhere to hide if you are near (within 30 miles) a nuclear strike---you might as well forget living very long---and it tells you to locate yourself somewhere far away from any nuclear bomb target if you want to survive. With those basic lessons are others: accept your fate if you choose to live in a large city, or be a survivalist if you choose to survive.

Forget about being an anti-nuke activist and/or voting to change policy. That's a fool's game. An idealist's game. You'll be proven correct---but you'll be dead.

Keep a low profile and get away, or shrug and enjoy life while you can. You might be lucky.

---Richard E. Geis

Red-Haired Heroes, Brown-Haired Losers

By Hannah M. G. Shapero

In the course of my job I read a lot of fantasy and science fiction. As an illustrator, I have a different attitude toward reading than the usual reader. I don't look for plot, characterization, neat ideas, or any of those other nonessentials; I read only for descriptions of what things look like. I want to see visual details of people, scenes, costumes, props, and special effects---because that's what I use in my work.

Along the way I've noticed something important about the characters in fantasy and science fiction books. None of them look like me. They don't look like any of my friends or relatives, either. I find a huge disproportion in the coloration of the main characters. Most of them are either red-headed or blonde! Dark-haired people like me and everyone I know are relegated to the realm of supporting characters, serfs, and shlepps. The only dark hair you can have and still be a hero is pure black, and even then only if you have grey eyes.

In fact, I can tell what is going to happen in the plot just by knowing the color of the characters' hair and eyes. Since virtually everyone in these books is white, there are the only distinguishing features to go by. I have finally decided to compile a chart of my findings so that you, too, can plot by color.

IF A CHARACTER HAS:

WHITE hair, GREY eyes: Apart from the connotations of old age, white hair signifies divinity (a White-haired character represents God in the Bible's books of Daniel and Revelations) or at least awesome spiritual or magical power. Characters with white hair include Elves, Cosmic Wanderers, Sorcerers and Sorceresses, and other more-than-human characters.

WHITE hair, PINK or RED eyes are albino characteristics and of course mean weirdness and magic wherever found. The prime example of the Weird Albino is Michael Moorcock's Elric of Melniboné.

IF A CHARACTER HAS:

BLONDE hair, BLUE eyes: To be blonde is to be blameless and good-hearted in both the male and female characters. Blonde hair means innocence, desirability, and good breeding. A blonde is probably or royal or at

least noble blood. The Sweet Girl that our Hero marries at the end of the story, after he has gone through all his tasks to win her, is invariably blonde. Blue-eyed blondes, however, are not necessarily intelligent or talented, just nice.

BLONDE hair, GREY eyes: Grey eyes always mean a character of intelligence, complexity, and deep thought. Added to the intrinsic goodness of blonde hair they make a noble but more complex figure, for instance Duke Alaric Morgan from Katherine Kurtz' Deryni books. A blonde, grey-eyed character will have more adventures and be in more danger than a blonde and blue-eyed character. Blonde and grey almost always has royal or noble blood but is more likely to be a king in exile or in hiding, unlike the open royalty of blue eyes.

BLONDE hair, GREEN eyes: Green eyes are ambiguous. They may signify evil traits or jealousy. When paired with the noble blonde hair they may mean personality faults or a hereditary curse for our main character to overcome.

BLONDE hair, BROWN or DARK eyes: A blonde character is very rarely evil. One exception may be if the character has dark eyes. This combination signifies the demonic underlying the innocent. It is used to great advantage by Julian May in her Pliocene Exile series, describing the awful character of Felice.

IF A CHARACTER HAS:

RED hair, GREY eyes: Red hair is the most popular main character color. Countless protagonists or their heroic and beautiful main companions have red hair. While blondes are sweet and noble, reds are charismatic and gifted and brilliant, though not always of royal or even noble ancestry. Red hair signifies a special gift: magic, psionic talent, super intelligence, super strength. Redheads are winners, outstanding heroes and heroines, who are great by competence rather than the blonde's inheritance. Marion Zimmer Bradley has combined the two traditions in her Darkover series by making red hair the badge both of nobility and of special gifts. Morally, reds are not the angelic blondes, but they are not inclined to evil as a committed way of life. Combined with the grey eyes of intelligence and complexity, red hair grey eyes make

an unbeatable character

RED hair, BLUE or GREEN eyes: The less moral green eyes accentuates the somewhat roughish nature of red hair. In both men and women, they signify hot sexuality. Red hair in general is a much more erotic color than blonde.

RED hair, BROWN or BLACK eyes: This combination signifies a demonic, amoral, but highly gifted character, one the reader cannot help admiring. Julian May created such a character in her Pliocene Exile's Aiken Drum. Whatever a redhead takes up, he or she does well. Competent in everything, the red-haired character will hold center stage, tackle adventures with gusto, and win out in the end. They win wars, get the best mates and lovers, find the treasures, gain the kingdoms, etc. They are obviously superior people.

A NOTE ON VIOLET AND GOLDEN EYES:

Liz Tatlor aside, violet eyes in both sexes mean incredible desirability and unusual gifts. People with violet eyes are unique, mysterious, strange---perhaps not quite human. Magic or psionic powers will be part of this character. Violet eyes are never stupid or evil, and are never wasted on a secondary character. Most fantasy authors eventually include at least one violet-eyed character. Brown eyes may belong to a good main character, but



only if they are light enough for the author to describe as "amber," "tawny," or "golden."

IF A CHARACTER HAS:

BROWN hair, any color eyes: Brown is the color of faithful, good, secondary, supporting characters. The color of earth, it describes earthy characters: peasants, serfs, craftsmen, soldiers, servants, tavernkeepers, wenches, laborers, squires, etc. Brown hair loves and cares for our bright-haired main character but may not always be loved in return. He or she will often die to save the main character. Brown hair is not usually seriously evil but may operate outside the law, such as a Good Thief, sorcerer's apprentice, procurer, smuggler, wharf rat, spy on your side, etc. Brown-haired people are expendable. Brown hair is the security guard who buys the farm, the soldier who takes the arrow in the first charge, the kind peasant girl who hides the hunted blonde hero and then is killed by his pursuers. Brown hair is brave but not too bright. Authors have tried to jazz up brown hair by adding extra colors such as red or gold streaks, or by calling brown auburn, chestnut, or bronze. The more of the noble colors that are streaked or highlighted into brown hair, the more noble the character is. Hairdressers pay attention!

ANOTHER NOTE:

DARK man, **BLONDE** woman: The usual pattern for fantasy is that men are dark, and women are blonde. Think of Prince Valiant and his Lady Aletta. A dark-haired man has more adventures to go through, more personal faults to overcome, more temptations to evil--more character in general than the blonde and blameless woman, who need not do anything but sit and

EDITOR'S NOTE: HANNAH SHAPERO.

HAS INNOCENTLY, OR SLIGHTLY MALICIOUSLY, EXPOSED A DIRTY LITTLE SECRET OF THE FICTION WORLD, IS THIS PRACTICE GOOD OR BAD? A SIMPLE RESPONSE TO MARKET FORCES, OR PREJUDICE?

be in distress. Active and aggressive women are likely to be red-haired. In feminist-influenced authors, the color rules for men apply to women as well.

YET ANOTHER NOTE:

METALLIC COLORS: The more metallic, the more heroic (unless your character is a robot). If the author describes coloration as gold, silver, copper, bronze, iron, or steel, the author is describing a hero. Metallic colors imply unusual strength in a character: for example, Doc Savage, the Man of Bronze, or Conan, the barbarian with his bronzed skin and steel-blue eyes. The only ill-omened metallic color commonly used is lead: leaden robes or eyes bode no good.

IF A CHARACTER HAS:

BLACK hair, **GREY** eyes: This is the standard royal coloration, even more than blonde hair. A black-haired king or queen will have more courage and brains than the weaker but nicer blonde. Often the brother in a royal family will have this coloration, while his sister will have the ladylike blonde hair blue eyes combina-

tion. Tolkien, Kurtz, and Springer, to name just a few authors, all feature black haired grey-eyed kings and queens. Even if these colors are not royal, they will signify divine election or divine gifts.

BLACK hair, **GREEN** or **BLUE** eyes: The character with these colors is the unsuccessful contender for the throne. He may be a cadet son or even illegitimate. Eric and Corwin of Amber, with their black hair and green or blue eyes, are examples of this tradition. Black hair green or blue eyes will be a very good warrior, swordsman, statesman, or lover, but he will never get to rule.

WHITE STREAK in **BLACK** hair: Magic is less important with a black-haired light-eyed character; it tends to be used as a means (to kingship) rather than an end. However, a white streak in black hair means major magic use.

BLACK hair, **DARK** eyes: Darkness and dark coloration signify a quintessentially evil character. Black hair dark eyes includes wicked kings and queens, bad wizards and witches, vampires, werewolves, evil lovers and seductresses, ghouls, enemy spies, and traitors. They are criminals who have chosen evil as a permanent way of life; sneaky cutthroats and thieves. They are immoral and perverse, often sexually twisted. They are not characters of the light. However in rare cases, though their dark coloration means they dabble in evil magic or do evil things, they may be redeemed at the end of the story--by the love of a blonde character.

BLACK and **ASIAN** people do not usually appear in fantasy unless the author is Consciously Ethnic. In these ethnic fantasies color stereotyping is mercifully put aside, and we read of Persia, Africa, India, Japan, and China, with nary a blonde or redhead in sight. What a relief!

Now you are going to scream that you have read a lot of books with dark-haired heroes or blonde villains. Of course! So have I. I rejoice in those authors who go against these color patterns and come up with original heroes and heroines. My Plot-by-Color goes only by statistics. It can't cover everything and there are innumerable exceptions. What I have tried to do here is make readers and authors aware of color stereotype patterns. Many of these traditions are thousands of years old and are so ingrained in us that sometimes authors don't even realize that the stereotypes are there.

But let's be thankful that color stereotyping doesn't work in real life...or does it?



OTHER VOICES

UGEL'S SAGA
By Jack Vance
Timescape, 334 pp., \$14.50

REVIEWED BY KARL EDD

In the 1950s Jack Vance's DYING EARTH caught our fancy and was followed in the 1960s with the sequel, THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD. Lovers of monsters, wizards and magicians -- the spiritual descendants of those who devoured a CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT -- awaited the next capers of Ugel the Clever.

We glow. Ugel is back. Inconnu (French, inconnu, the unknown?), the Laughing Magician, has marooned Ugel far from the land of Almetry (the Welfare State?). Ugel feels he must somehow make his way back from the towers of Flutic, ultimately being drawn across the Ocean of Sighs by the many-colored sea worms that Chief Worminger (Warmonger?) Drofo (O-Ford, backwards?) teaches him to control.

Middle Earth and Beowulf fans will automatically enjoy this story but it should have wider appeal as JASON AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE fantasies are buried deep within the collective unconscious of the human race. Our own New World was settled by the unsettled of the Old World, and we are not so far removed from them and their impatient genes. --Kevin Eugene Johnson's cover painting is superb.

Bits of humor and wordplay are verbal sequins that glitter throughout the book. Jocularly it is teamed with subtlety and the matched pair runs well. Classic Aristotelian unity of time, place, theme is not found in the book, naturally, as it falls into the picaresque category. This is of little import as the artificial structure that Aristotle tried to impose is a structure demanded by an uncertain society or a nervous ruling class that seeks to hide from life's raw, untidy pattern of coincidence, random chance and raggedness. If you demand a tightly woven plot structure, you may feel uncomfortable with this book that is heavy with interesting incidents. All other readers will enjoy most or all of it.

There is, for example, time out while the characters play the

card game Skax and discuss the game Rampoio. Such byplay may at first glance seem of no value to plot movement but a closer examination shows that the episode serves to delineate character. Trufans will read through such episodes; others may skip-read.

As for style: "Sleep? When you are dead, then you shall sleep long and sound. Until that mournful event, guard each iota of awareness; it is the only treasure worthy of the name. Who knows when fire will leave the sun?..."

There is much fire and sparkle in this fantasy-saga that draws us along by a series of majestic and sonorous passages that touch you in such a magic way that you will no longer be innocent of the secret of the scales or the songs that are keystones of the heart -- all of which will be clear at the end of the book -- and at some time during your reading you may quietly say to yourself, "I am Ugel."

Or, "Where did the reading time go so swiftly?"

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION
Edited by Gardner Dozois
Bluejay Bks, 570 pp., \$9.95

REVIEWED BY ROBERT SABELLA

Bluejay Books has been advertising this book as the biggest of the Best-of-the-Year anthologies. At 570 pages containing 25 stories, that claim is undisputable. The more important question is whether such length is desirable; after all, were there 25 science fiction stories published in 1983 worthy of the title Best of the Year?

Unfortunately, no. Perhaps a dozen stories in this collection live up to the title claim. But fortunately, Gardner Dozois is a good enough editor that the rest of the collection is more than mere filler. Most of the stories are good, ranging from clever little pieces to well-written stories weak on plot to worthy experiments that failed. Only two stories can be considered outright clunkers.

So which were the best stories of the year? My favorite in the

I DO TEN REVIEWS A MONTH, EVERY MONTH.

I'M CURRENT AS OF NOVEMBER, 1976 AND LOSING GROUND.



THE FANE'S APPRENTICE

book was George R.R. Martin's "The Monkey Treatment." While not an important story by any means, it is that rarity, a genuinely funny science fiction story. It is the final word on all the crazy diets currently sweeping the nation. At times I laughed aloud, while I hardly ever stopped chuckling. If you can ignore *cosmic meaning* and *relevance* temporarily, this is a topnotch story.

Almost as good is Robert Silverberg's "Multiples." It is good to know that while his recent novels have been relatively simplistic adventures (particularly the two Valentine novels), his short fiction retains the strength and vitality of what he was writing in the early-to-mid Seventies. This story concerns a woman with a single personality trying desperately to join the segment of society of people with multiple personalities. As is typical of Silverberg, this is both a personality study as well as an examination of the society itself.

Another worthy story is Kim Stanley Robinson's "Black Air." His writing reminds me of C.J. Cherryh's in many ways. His prose is straight-forward without any flourishes, his pacing slow and very careful. He tells about ordinary people in situations without any of the flash and sense of wonder that are usually science fiction's lifeblood. Yet his stories are unusually meaty. It doesn't matter if he's describing life in Venice or on a spacecraft or on the ill-fated Spanish Armada (the setting of the story), he is gripping while also entertaining and

always makes you want to read more. Robinson is perhaps the most promising of all the newer writers in science fiction.

Ian Watson's "Slow Birds" is one notch below the abovementioned stories. It concerns a future Britain slowly being glassed over and made uninhabitable by the slow birds of the title. Watson is not concerned with the mysterious birds as much as by the people menaced by them. What would it take to live a "normal" life under such a threat? He is convincing without ever being boring.

The other good stories are by a variety of relatively new writers: Pat Murphy, John Kessel, Greg Bear, Rand Lee, Connie Willis, Jack McDevitt. Perhaps the best description of this collection is that it provides as good an overview of the science fiction short story in 1983 as a single anthology could. Perhaps it does not live up to its title claim, but that's a marketing necessity. After all, who would buy a book entitled Good Science Fiction of the Year?

CLOUD WARRIOR
By Patrick Tilley
MacMillan, New York, 280 p., \$14.95
REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

As the first in a series to be called *The Talisman Prophecy*, this sf novel is satisfying enough to stand on its own. Tilley's previous two novels included *FADE OUT* (1975), a fascinating hard sf story involving an alien colonization of Earth and *MISSION* (1981), a whimsical, theologically overdone fantasy about the return of Christ.

CLOUD WARRIOR is the author's most ambitious novel yet, using for its setting a post-nuclear war America a thousand years in the future. This premise is not new--in fact in recent years we have witnessed a resurgence of this theme (*THE ARMAGEDDON RAG* and *WARDAY*)---but the plot gives us an interesting story describing the clash of two cultures; the Trackers of the Federation and their elite wingmen, the Cloud Warriors, who live underground totally dependant on technology and the Mutes, primitive tribes of survivors who live on the surface where their summoners practice a form of magic that allows them to manipulate the natural elements. This technology versus magic is reminiscent of Stephen King's *THE STAND*; the differences being the time period and the absence of a mystical good against evil found in King's novel.

The novel is fast paced with good characterization to contrast the

life-styles of the two groups of protagonist; both of whom are locked in a centuries-old war of supremacy of the "blue-sky world". The story revolves around captured Federation wingman Steve Brickman and his struggle to reconcile what he has been taught of the Mutes with what he learns from living among them. Brickman's growing friendship with Clearwater and Cadillac, two Mutes with psychic powers provides the internal conflict as he plots to escape while beginning to question the motivation of the larger struggle.

Overall, this is a solid novel with depth and the promise of plenty of plot twist to unwind in further novels as the Federation and the Mutes either destroy each other or learn to live together.

CITY OF SORCERY
By Marion Zimmer Bradley
DAW, 423 pp., cover art by James Gurney, \$5.50

REVIEWED BY PAUL MCGUIRE

CITY OF SORCERY is a sequel to *THE DANDAR HOUSE* which is a sequel to both *THE SHATTERED CHAIN* and *THE FORBIDDEN TOWER*, the latter a sequel to *THE SPELL SWORD* and prequel to *THE BLOODY SUN* which is a sequel ... DO NOT PANIC! If you have never read a Darkover novel, you can read this one (or any other) without confusion. Darkover is a series, not a serial. In fact, for those making their first visit to Darkover, it may seem that there is a bit too much rehash and fill-in, although for the rest of us it is great to get all the latest gossip about old friends. Rest assured, before too many pages are turned, MZB will have focused on an epic quest. (She acknowledges Talbot Mundy's *THE DEVIL'S GUARD* as having inspired her present work.)

Highly strange events lead a Terran agent and a Darkovan Amazon to believe that a city exists in a region of the planet believed to be unexplored, uninhabited and inaccessible. Further, this city could be the fabled home of the ancient Wise Sisterhood, a place of vast wealth and total knowledge. They journey to it and five others soon follow. Can they all maintain their sisterhood long enough to find The Sisterhood?

Magda is a Terran born on Darkover and long before this gone na-



tive, a former Terran intelligence agent and current Amazon with psionic power. Jaelle is a Darkovan Amazon with psionics who is Magda's legal freemate. Camilla is Darkovan Amazon, ex-mercenary who was psychologically scarred when very young and now denies she has psionic ability of any kind. Rafaella, also a Darkovan Amazon, was once Jaelle's lover and partner and believes it was Magda who came between the two of them. Lexie is a Terran agent who strongly resents and dislikes Magda whose legend has cowed her and overshadowed her career. Cholayna is the head of Terran Intelligence and perhaps too old and over-the-hill to be along. Vanessa is a Terran outside of the spaceport city for the first time.

The catmen and other inhuman monsters the party were warned of, all seem to have something better to do than bother them. Bandits are encountered, but most of the period on the journey which makes up the center half of the novel, are perils of mountain climbing. Since Darkover's mountains make our Himalayas seem like foothills, that still provides plenty of thrills. (Not to mention the Evil Sisterhood.)

There is more more metaphysics than the supernatural in this novel. The journey across the mountains is paralleled by a quest in to themselves. To confront inner truth may be as dangerous as any external threat. Learn and grow or repress and die.

MZB's special realm is a harsh, cold, mystical planet called Darkover. CITY OF SORCERY is the 18th volume about it (although there are two versions of two of the novels, giving completists 20 books), and each new work of this excellent series is a major literary event. Little science fiction or fantasy this time, but there is unusually strong characterization and human interaction.

WARNING: Not only are Ms. Bradley's books addictive, but they may be hazardous to your complacency.

DESTINATION MOON
By Robert Heinlein
Ed. by David G. Hartwell
& L.W. Currey
GREGG Press, 126 pp., \$15.00

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

This is a collection of four pieces related to the 1950 movie *DESTINATION MOON*, which Heinlein inspired and co-wrote. The book contains an introduction by editor

Hartwell, the story "Destination Moon" originally published in SHORT STORIES magazine September, 1950, "Shooting Destination Moon" article by Heinlein from the July, 1950 ASTOUNDING, a reprint of the promotional book for the film and additional photos from the movie. Each of the reprints is an exact photographic copy of the original, even the page numbers are the same.

This is a very nice collection and contains much good material. The introduction compares the movie with the short story and the novel, ROCKET SHIP GALILEO, which both were based upon. (As such I recommend reading the introduction last; it gives away too much of the story.) The editor also compares Heinlein to one of his characters, D.D. Harriman in THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON.

I recommend this excellent and interesting book.

ALIENS FROM ANALOG
Edited by Stanley Schmidt
Davis Pub., 1983, 286 pp, \$12.95

REVIEWED BY GLENN T. WILSON

An excellent book, with eleven stories about alien contact, some of them classics, from 1944 to 1981. There's a fascinating progression of styles and topics over the years, and I'll go through them chronologically.

"The Waveries" (Frederic Brown, 1944) is not really an alien contact story, but simply a "what-if" story -- inexplicable things that gobble radio waves and electricity force a return to horses and steam engines, and everyone is bucolically happy. B-rating.

In "The Children's Hour" (Lawrence O'Donnell, 1944, A) the protagonist, under hypnosis remembers his romance with the beautiful but strange Clarissa. What happened and why did her "guardian" make him forget?

"First Contact" (Murray Leinster, 1945, A+) is a classic story of alien contact, a spaceship-to-space ship meeting in a distant nebula shrouded in dust. The ingenious "happy-ending" compromise is a little implausible, but what the heck.

"Hobbyist" (Eric Frank Russell, 1947, A). A stranded space scout, almost out of fuel, explores a new planet, sensibly and cautiously. But why is there only one of each species?

"Unhuman Sacrifice" (Katherine MacLean, 1958, A+). Why do the natives hang upside down above

Paulette's Place

EMERGENCE
By David R. Palmer
Bantam, Nov 1984, \$2.95

REVIEWED BY PAULETTE MINARE'

This science fiction adventure features Candidia Maria Smith-Foster who was orphaned at ten months then adopted by Dr. and Mrs. Foster. Born eleven years ago to normal human parents, Candy was a most precocious child who could read at age two and mastered basic math at age three. She taught herself rapidly and efficiently by reading extensively. Soo Kim McDivott taught her Sixth Degree karate which proved indispensable later for self defense. Candy and her inseparable pet macaw, Terry Dactyll together in their underground shelter survive a bionuclear war which demimates most of the earth's population.

After their emergence Candy learns from the "Tarzan File" that she cannot be harmed by any human disease since she is an evolutionary mutation called Homo post hominem, "Man Who Follows Man," the youngest of the 150,000 other "AAs" scattered about the United States. To find out others of her kind Candy sets out in a van equipped with electric winch, M-16s, etc. Besides the damaged terrain, voracious wild dogs and escaped zoo animals are a threat. Eventually, she contacts Adam in Baltimore. The wild events of their meeting makes exciting reading. An excerpt follows after Adam has nursed Candy to health:

"And though I have acquired an exhaustively detailed painstakingly thorough, unflinchingly intimate familiarity with your every tangible aspect...I must admit that I would have traded gladly every success I've enjoyed in the past in that respect at any moment during these six days for the privilege of getting you dressed. You have not been a fun date." (Page 100)

After finding other hominids Candy volunteers for a suicide mission to rocket into space and deactivate an orbiting strontium-90 bomb which is programmed to ruin the earth. Read the book to find out if Candy survives.

This first novel by David R. Palmer is action-packed and exciting, full of witty dialogue, appealing to all readers. Don't miss it.

THE DUNGEON MASTER: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF JAMES DALLAS EGBERT III
By William Dear
Houghton Mifflin, Oct 1984, \$16.95

REVIEWED BY PAULETTE MINARE'

This mystery 284-page adventure relates the 1979 disappearance of 16-year-old genius, Dallas Egbert, from the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing where special courses were offered for the gifted. Private detective William Dear of Dallas, Texas, who is well-known for his solutions of difficult cases, narrates this adventure in the first person. The science fiction aspect is derived from Dallas's addiction to the TSR, Inc., game of Dungeons & Dragons (D&D); he attended many science fiction conventions and was an accomplished computer programmer.

Dallas was a social misfit. At 16 he was a sophomore at Michigan State, small for his age and with the brain of a genius; he was unable to make friends with his schoolmates. To attract attention he repeatedly practiced a most dangerous stunt of "trestling" on the railroad tracks. He was a drug user and admittedly homosexual.

Although Dallas disappeared from college on August 15, his parents were not notified until eight days later. William Dear discovered the existence of an extensive network of tunnels underneath the college buildings, which the administrators insisted were inaccessible to students, although Mr. Dear uncovered indisputable evidence that they were easily and often entered by them. In fact, Dallas and others used them at times to play D&D despite the many dangers.

Dallas's disappearance was attended by fearful experiences and repeated suicide attempts. In this account you will learn of the pressures which depressed Dallas and motivated the unusual events which transpired.

This first book by William Dear is the best adventure I have read--and to think it is a most unique actual experience written by the detective who solved the case! Your attention will never waver from the first page to the final one where more tragedy awaits.



the flood waters when they reach maturity? A dopey, dogmatic missionary jumps to the wrong conclusions, with unfortunate (but interesting) results.

As in some other stories of this kind, the missionaries, anthropologists, and xenologists are given the "foil" role of arguing in favor of bone-headed explanations, thus giving the reader the fun of trying to figure out the correct conclusion on his own.

"Big Sword" (Paul Ash, 1958, A+) has the same theme of humans contacting aliens with a weird life cycle. Would you believe, intelligent creatures a few inches tall who hatch from tree pods? Yes, but why would evolution ever produce intelligence in such a species?

"Now Inhale" (Eric Frank Russell, A-) is one of those "trick" stories. If your alien captors insist they will put you to death for spying, but allow you to play a game first, with your aim to string out play for as long as possible, what game do you pick?

"...And Comfort to the Enemy" (Stanley Schmidt himself, 1969, A-) deals with conflict between two alien groups, one of which has a totally unorthodox method of warfare.

"Wings of Victory" (Paul Andersen, 1972, A) has another Earth exploration party, who discover a civilization of giant eagle-like creatures, the Ythrians. As in some other stories, there's a dogmatic exploration party member who doggedly misinterprets all the evidence and gets the group into big trouble.

"Green-Eyed Lady" (Allison Tellure, 1981, A) is about an extraordinarily different civilization of crab-like creatures who communicate by flashing colors and worship a giant intelligent whale-like creature as their God.

Last but not least, "Petals of Rose" (Mark Steigler, 1981, A-) is a really excellent story about contact with aliens who live life at an extraordinarily fast pace, packing a human adult existence into only 36 hours. They pass on learning and cultural norms by having just-mature species members consume the brain-blood of their dead predecessors. This, like quite a number of other stories, is based on that fascinating worm experiment where the worms allegedly learned by eating the DNA from ground-up brains of other worms, a procedure that opened up all kinds of interesting vistas of students learning by eating puree of professor (it never seemed to do New Guinea natives any good; they

just managed to get the "laughing disease"). I believe those worm experiments have since been discredited, since no one else was able to replicate the experiment. Oh, well, another brilliant idea bites the dust, just like those old Venusian jungles and heechee tunnels, now covered over with 800-degree heat and clouds of hot concentrated sulfuric acid.

Anyway Steigler goes far beyond the basic idea, in his study of its ramifications and implications when an Earth ally decides the Rosarian fast-livers would make excellent development engineers for a high-priority space project.

All in all, a truly excellent collection. Buy it!



SLEEPLESS NIGHTS IN THE PROCRUSTEAN BED
ESSAYS BY HARLAN ELLISON
Edited by Marty Clark
Borgo Press

REVIEWED BY MARK MANSELL

Harlan Ellison has been known as one of the most opinionated people in speculative fiction, and deservedly so. His introductions and story notes are often as interesting as the fiction itself, and combine to give Ellison's collections a character like no others in the field. His speeches are unequalled for the interest and controversy they elicit and his essays are among the most vivid in that literary form.

What this is leading up to is the fact that SLEEPLESS NIGHTS IN THE PROCRUSTEAN BED is one of the most fascinating and thought-provoking volumes to come into my hands in a long time. This collection of twenty essays covers a gamut of subjects from television to video games to the Common Man to True Love itself. On every one of these subjects Ellison uses his scalpel-edged typewriter to eviscerate the assumptions people blindly hold, and hold them up to critical examination. Not everyone will agree with Ellison on each of the opinions put forth in this book, but he meets the most important requirements of an essayist that he makes the reader think.

Many of these essays will be well-known to readers, such as "Revealed at Last! What Killed the Dinosaurs and You Don't Look So Terrific Yourself" which is the culmination of years of warnings about the dangers of television to the human psyche, and "You Don't

Know Me, I Don't Know You" that Ellison uses to express his disgust with the fawning and parochial element of science fiction fandom.

But this collection also shows a side of Ellison quite different from the often abrasive facade people see at his speeches. His eulogy to his mother was thoughtful and touching, an effort to define a complex mother-son relationship. "Place Down in Gloria Swanson's Swimming Pool" is a heartfelt tribute to Los Angeles that is a literary version of Randy Newman's "I Love L.A." "Voe Dee Voe Oh Dee" is a salute to Robert Silverberg and he and Ellison's long friendship, written with wit and humor.

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS IN THE PROCRUSTEAN BED will make some people angry as hell and others will say "Right on!" But everyone will find it an excellent exercise of the essayist's art.

AMERICAN FLAGG,
By Howard Chaykin
First Comics, 32 pp. (monthly)
Published since June 1983, \$1.25

REVIEWED BY ALLEN VARNEY

If you promise not to throw this magazine across the room, I will say that we have here a respectable, original work of science fiction, worthy of serious consideration, presented in -- dare I say it? -- comic book form. Now, wait, keep reading: this is not comic-book "science fiction," that depressing and utterly mindless superheric space opera. AMERICAN FLAGG is the real stuff, intelligent near-future extrapolation presented with Besterian verve.

It is 2033, several decades after a general collapse of society so drastic that the American government has relocated to Gargaringrad, Mars. America is degenerating slowly; the people are jaded, decadent and violent. Upper classes in the major cities have withdrawn into "plexmalls" (arcologies) leaving the downtown areas prey to perpetual gang warfare -- which is nationally televised and garners high ratings.

Reuben Flagg, former TV star, born on Mars of American (Jewish) parents, is sent to Chicago's plex-mall by a political purge and there becomes deputy "plexus ranger." Soon he is embroiled in a variety of plots involving a bootleg TV station (which he ends up controlling), black market basketball, an attempt by Fourth World Industries of Brazil to buy the state of Illinois and numerous

sexual encounters with an astonishing number of women. Flagg finds that the American ideal he grew up loving has been betrayed -- "by the banks ... by big business ... by slimy fat cats who use patriotism like a tart uses cheap perfume. Betrayed by the plex." Reuben resolves to do what he can to stop America's decline -- and his approach is not all the kind of thing you'd expect.

You can tell this isn't exactly SPIDER MAN. There's plenty of gunfire and leaping around but the tone here is witty, admirably sophisticated in its futurism and -- incidentally -- very media-conscious in the manner of Norman Spinrad which gives a convincing McLuhanesque slickness to the presentation.

The creator, Howard Chaykin, is best known in SF circles for illustrating Delany's *EMPIRE* and Bester's *THE STARS MY DESTINATION* (which Chaykin acknowledges as an influence on *FLAGG*) and perhaps for Marvel's comic-book adaptation of *STAR WARS*. Suffice it to say that his artwork has gotten a lot better since these unfortunate efforts. His expressive faces add to the emotional resonance of the characters; his page layouts, though often confusing at first look, nicely accent the aforementioned high-power narration. Words and pictures in *FLAGG* don't so much complement one another as stampee over each other in a razzle-dazzle barrage on the reader's senses. The effect is, for me, exhilarating.

The chief drawback to *AMERICAN FLAGG* is an uncharacteristically immature fascination with cheesecake. Voluptuous women, usually scantily-clad, strut through every issue throwing themselves at Flagg -- who never hesitates to catch them either. It's an amusing touch of characterization that Flagg, a likable and otherwise intelligent hunk, is often led by his libido -- but the sexism here might turn away those readers who get militant about such things. (In Chaykin's defense, all the women are strongly and individually characterized, and the prevailing spirit is one of sheer fun.)

The other main drawback to *FLAGG* is that inevitable crap-shot attendant on periodical publication: Can Chaykin sustain the quality? As I write, Chaykin has reached issue #12. So far it's still impressive, though of course the novelty is gone. I can vouch for the first year's quality; how good this ongoing narrative will be when you encounter it is anyone's guess. Fair warning -- you will be coming in on the middle of

a storyline, and Chaykin isn't especially good at recapping plot and characters.

The comics industry, for decades a stifling assembly-line operation structured much like network television, has recently been changing rapidly. New publishers and a new distribution system have encouraged experimentation and fresh approaches to tired material. Occasionally even new material shows up; that's what we have here. I don't say *AMERICAN FLAGG* will set the SF world on fire, but for the first time in living memory the comic medium has produced an SF story that deserves consideration -- by any standard. No matter how high your brow, investigate *AMERICAN FLAGG*.

(Late news flash: Chaykin has taken a leave of absence on the art chores for issues #13 and 14 of *FLAGG*, giving things over to a far inferior team. However, he has returned to full duty, both writing and drawing with #15 ... and things look fine for now.)



THE ADVENTURES OF SAMURAI CAT
By Mark E. Rogers
Tom Doherty Assoc., \$8.95
Lotta neat illustrations in color!

REVIEWED BY ALMA JO WILLIAMS

At last, Mark Rogers has chronicled the daring exploits of that great samurai warrior, Miaowara Tomokati, known as the furball from hell. Here we see some of his greatest triumphs which were copied and litera(l)ly exploited by the likes of J.R.R. Tolkien, H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard, just to name a few, who then inserted their own pallid creations to pass for heroes in place of this gallant intrepid cat! Cheer at his valiant battle against the dread demon B'aaloph at the Bridge of Catzad-Dum. Quiver in horror at the confrontation with Wilbur Wartley and the Real Old One, the Great k'Chu. Marvel at his high adventure with Mighty Con-Ed, the

Barbarian against the nefarious necromancer Thipageti-Thoth, and raise the flag at the saving of Assgard from Ragnarok. Lotta good clean gory fun!! The illos are well worth the price alone.

THE TITHONIAN FACTOR

By Richard Cowper
Victor Gollancz, London, 1984
150 pp., \$14.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

This collection of short stories by the author of *THE ROAD TO CORLAY* contains six tales about coming of age, either biologically or intellectually. Cowper's prose is crisp and his characters are well defined but he has a tendency to lose the thread of the plot in the short form and at times this produces stories that are interesting yet end weakly. For me, this was the case with the first four stories, including "The Tithonian Factor" that dealt with the problem of near-immortality.

The final two SF stories, however, make this book worth a read. "The Scent of Silverdill," a Bradburyesque story of a boy's yearning to learn what it was like on Mars before the colonist there revolted and closed off travel to and from Earth, was impressive. The story had a quiet beauty as the old star traveler told of the silverdill "that covers the ground like silver smoke ... rippling like water all along the bottoms of the gullies." "A Message to the King of Broddingnag" is a terrific thriller concerning a biological experiment that wreaks havoc as a result of what one of the characters describes as "the wrong action for the right reason."

ENCHANTMENT

Stories by Doris Vallejo
Illustrated by Boris Vallejo
Ballantine, 1984, 107 pp.
\$14.95 (U.S.); \$20.25 (Canada)

REVIEWED BY JOHN DIPRETE

Boris Vallejo has teamed up with his wife, Doris, to create a short story collection highlighted by vivid fantasy art. Measuring 9" X 12" this Ballantine softcover features fifteen full-color, full-page paintings with twice as many black-and-white drawings (in less detailed form) dispersed throughout the volume.

Story-wise, Doris Vallejo's sensual weird fiction reveals a deft prose style, insight into the human psyche, and a flare for the erotic. However, her stories

somehow lack the human touch; her characters do not elicit warmth or reader involvement, leaving the tales' recipient out in the cold-est nethers. Since we don't really care what happens to the protagonists, the stories too often resemble mood pieces, spiced up with graphic sexual description. Some readers may even come away with the feeling that she has written each one around her husband's artistic themes, rendered in his paintings. In this sense, her stories illustrate, in verbal form, the central art and tend to stand less-than-complete and wholly satisfying in themselves.

Pictorially, Boris Vallejo's powerful erotic art enconces the nude female upon a sensuously-electrified throne for the human eye. Imagine Michelangelo's David, and you can visualize Boris Vallejo's own view of Creation, seen here in terms of the sexually-luminous, voluptuous female. The texture and quality of each bold fantasy scenario radiates an eye-riveting aura of deeply-felt magnetic realism. Erotic dream stuff. (The luscious fibers of late-night REM sleep!)

STILL LIVING? YETI, SASQUATCH AND THE NEANDERTHAL ENIGMA

By Myra Shackley
 Thames & Hudson Books, 1983
 192 pp., 60 illustrations

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

Unlike other books on this topic, this is a serious, down-to-earth study. The author is an anthropologist who has done considerable research on hominids, including travel to Asia to study areas of hominid sightings.

The book begins with a study of fetal children, humans apparently raised by animals, and moves on to the Yeti and Sasquatch and then to other possible hominids, the Almas, seen from Mongolia through to the Caucasus mountains and the Chuchumaa, reported in Siberia. The author reports sightings, contact with people and other evidence including footprints and hair samples.

The author suggests possible evolutionary paths, in which the Yeti and Sasquatch may be descendants of Gigantopithecus and the Almas a descendant of the Neanderthal or Homo Habilis.

On the negative side the study of the fossil record is too shallow; it does not consider the complexity of the evolutionary development of man and hominid. The author also places too much emphasis on positive evidence, virtual-

ly ignoring evidence questioning the existence of the hominoids or evidence challenging the validity of the positive evidence.

On the whole though, this is a rational study of an oft sensationalized subject and deserves considerable attention. Recommended.



CONSCIENCE PLACE

By Joyce Thompson
 Doubleday, 1984, 225 pp., \$13.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

Horror fiction comes in many forms, as diverse as ethereal spirits that dwell in an abandoned house on a windswept hill and the unspeakable evil that lurks in wait for us in the dark of the night. Possibly more haunting than the parade of creatures that populate many horror novels today is, to borrow a phrase from Harlan Ellison, the "dangerous vision" of a government that hides away its accidents of birth under the guise of humanitarian concerns. If you are horrified by the possibility of human genetic mutations -- caused by exposures to high levels of radiation -- then Joyce Thompson's CONSCIENCE PLACE is indeed horror filled if not a horror novel.

The "Place" in CONSCIENCE PLACE is an experimental community for the multiply-handicapped under the leadership of Dr. Alice Halliburton, a sociologist known in the Place only as Brother Alice. Here sex is a non-issue; in fact, no gender distinctions are recognized or understood. Everyone is referred to as "he" and sexual stirrings are called the Excitement and considered a normal sign of physical maturity and nothing more. The population grows whenever the Fathers (the outside government) send new "hastlings" to the Place. Due to a highly secret funding (no U.S. President since John Kennedy has even known of its existence) the Place has no need for an economy

and instead concentrates all its efforts on developing the full potential of the individual, each contributing whatever skills he possesses to the collective good of the People.

The opening portion of this novel unfolds without the author's explaining the true nature of the Place; all references to the outside world are disguised in intentionally vague terms (the inhabitants have no knowledge of the outside except what Brother Alice has told them). The result is that the reader, like the People who reside in the Place, must struggle with trying to understand what is going on in the larger world in much the same way Plato's characters in the "Allegory of the Cave" attempted to understand their outside world through interpretation of the shadows on the cave wall.

Joyce Thompson's characterizations are adroit; the reader comes to know and feel for her characters without being burdened with excessive or maudlin details. She deftly switches points of view between the two primary characters: There is Brother Alice, the Administrator who loves the People and disguises herself as a silver-scaled mutant in order to be accepted and Bartholomew, a legless hermaphrodite, who performs the role of informal historian by recording major events of the community on television videotape. The author's excellent command of the technical aspects of television filming and editing are used to good advantage in portraying her appreciation for life in its varied forms and the gentle beauty of the Place.

Thompson's views regarding the morality of a government "cover-up" of this magnitude can be found just below the surface of the story and yet she never resorts to strident preaching, preferring instead to let the plot deliver her message. Beginning slowly as the background and mood must be absorbed, the pace quickens once Brother Alice learns that the Place's very existence is threatened.

The final resolution of CONSCIENCE PLACE was somewhat unsatisfying for me -- but entirely plausible -- while at the same time the author is successful in raising thought-provoking issues along the way to the novel's conclusion.

Against a backdrop of horrible deformities Joyce Thompson has told a unique story of the inner beauty of humanity and the struggle to preserve each individual's dignity. This is a different sort of novel: the prose is at points poetic and the impact of the images it creates will likely linger long after you have finished the

book. As a change of pace from the more standard horror fiction I recommend this book.

STREETLETHAL

By Steve Barnes
Ace SF, Aug 1983, \$2.95

REVIEWED BY ED BURNS

"Naked and transparent, the woman's smooth white body undulated slowly, beckoning to the empty streets." We are in the Los Angeles of 2022. Aubry Knight, enforcer, is set up to take a fall by his girl. She is acting on the orders of their criminal boss Luis Ortega. Aubry is sentenced to Death Valley Maximum Security Penitentiary where his recognition of betrayal and alienation turn him into a revenge-seeking automaton. He escapes seeking satisfaction against the Ortega family.

Surrounding Knight's quest the sex/drug, human potential, and misfits vs. society elements emerge. There is plenty of action combined with interesting character development and plot twists. Perceptive readers should have fun with this novel. On newsreel appears a Welles-Mustapha fight and the warden of D.V.M.S.P. is named Charteris. The reference to mystery is appropriate as Knight seeks to discover his own human identity while solving the puzzles surrounding the ruthless Ortega clan. This is a fast-paced enjoyable action yarn. It also has some interesting things to say concerning human relationships/drugs. It is way above average in overall performance. Try it.

THE SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

FILM HANDBOOK

By Alan Frank
Barnes & Noble, 192 pp, 233 illus

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

This book has entries on over 400 films, each giving the cast and credits, running time, description of the film and at least one review of the film. Often the editor has included reviews with sharply different points of view. There are also brief bios of some of the major directors, actors, writers, producers, special effects wizards and composers, a section about the major themes of genre films and a useful index.

This is an informative and useful book, also enjoyable to browse through. Recommended.

FUZZIES AND OTHER PEOPLE

By H. Beam Piper
Ace Original, Aug 1984
216 pp., \$2.95

REVIEWED BY IAN COVELL

Readers, begin here: When H. Beam Piper died in 1964, there was a rumor that a third Fuzzy novel to follow LITTLE FUZZY and THE OTHER HUMAN RACE existed in manuscript. The script didn't appear, the rumors faded. Several years ago, impelled by the popularity of the series, Ace engaged William Tuning to construct a final Fuzzy novel using his knowledge of Piper's work plus (I presume) aid from the executors of the estate. Tuning's FUZZY BONES appeared in 1981. Astonishingly, the real third Fuzzy novel manuscript was discovered among a pile of old H. Beam Piper papers in early 1983. Eighteen months later this lost and eagerly awaited novel is published as an original mass-market paperback. (The trilogy thus has two final volumes; Piper would be amused to realize that one of his books now exists in a parallel-universe edition.) It would be unfair to the late William Tuning and Piper to compare the two except to say there are no secret spaceships in FUZZIES AND OTHER PEOPLE.



The title shows Piper's concentration still on the ethical aspect of the Fuzzy race as they try to secure full legal rights. The tale begins soon after the court decision. Piper shows the ruling has created more problems than it has solved and that the humans' involvement with the child-like fuzzies is just as problematic because it would be too easy for the fuzzies to become dependent on superior human technology. On the other hand, the fuzzies must acquire some basic human attributes to secure their claim on their own planet. They have to lie.

Told in parallel plots that gradually merge into a coincidental but well-justified final encounter, Piper's novel, emphasizing the fuzzy side of things, is worth its twenty-year wait. Often humorous, even more often thoughtful and affecting, with a wolfish ending and a final ending that is a mixture of triumph, joy and underlying pathos, the whole is unforgettable.

Old friends and new move through its pages, but one line halfway through shows the true center of the book: "No more Little Fuzzy."

THE TALISMAN

By Stephen King & Peter Straub
Viking, 1984, 644 pp, \$18.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

A horror novel THE TALISMAN is not: What collaborators Stephen King and Peter Straub have created is a "media event" surrounding the publication of a fantasy novel with supernatural-horror overtones.

The push behind the joint effort is almost as interesting as the novel. After all, we have been hearing about this upcoming novel for over three years now; it's being launched with an unprecedented 600,000-copy first printing; over half a million is budgeted for promotion; and Steven Spielberg has bought the film rights.

It looks like Viking knows a commercial success when they see one; the question, however, is does the novel add or detract to the body of work already produced by the individual authors? Says King, in a press release, it is "a stronger novel as a work of art than I expected to write in collaboration with anybody else." I'm not so sure; there are wonderful sections where King's broad, sweeping prose blends seamlessly with Straub's penchant for attending to every detail. At other times, the differing voices -- stylistically speaking -- are apparent as one author completes a section and the other takes up the next. In its favor, I will say that for two such well-known authors of distinctive styles, this is easily the most successful collaboration I've read.

The risk of any collaboration is that through the mutual blending of strengths, somehow, that "magic" that each author had on his own will not surface; this is essentially my problem with the novel. Technically, it's a tour-de-force of epic fantasy proportions while emotionally I'm never drawn as deeply into the story as a novel by King or Straub. It's the reverse of why the Beatles, when John Lennon was still alive, never held a reunion concert after their breakup. Instinctively, they knew expectations were just too high and it would have been an impossibility to have the same impact the group collectively enjoyed in the past. And for the same reason that concert would never

reach the level the Beatles previously attained, THE TALISMAN has not achieved the authors' individual levels.

The story itself is a tried and true fantasy theme: An innocent youth's rites-of-passage quest for a magical object that will serve the purposes of good and vanquish evil. The protagonist this time is twelve-year-old Jack Sawyer, and the story opens with Jack biding his time in a New Hampshire resort hotel where his mother, a retired B-movie queen, has come to die of cancer. Both authors are particularly adept at using the juvenile lead device (Straub most effectively in SHADOWLAND; King in FIRESTARTER), and Jack Sawyer becomes a thoroughly realized character, if slightly limited emotionally. Fear and gritty determination are his stock and trade. Susceptible to suggestion in his time of grief and desperation -- yes, the authors tell us, twelve-year-olds can be desperate -- Jack meets Speedy Parker, an elderly black man who works at a nearby amusement park and is quickly introduced to the Territories, an alternate reality existing next to ours. Over there, Speedy hints, Jack must seek the mysterious talisman that can cure his mother and protect them from enemies that threaten to destroy them both.

The idea of a parallel world is fairly traditional; the twist here is the approach: Contemporary American landscapes interspersed with "flips" into the Territories where "the air is so sweet and clear a man can smell a radish being pulled from the ground a mile away," a world where "they have magic like we have physics." Despite the colorful metaphors the Territories offer nothing new for the fantasy reader, having been built solidly on the assumption that any alternate reality is convincing if its culture and pace is neo-medieval (or in this case medieval). It's the old let's substitute bows and arrows for guns, horse-drawn carriages for cars, and get on with it. Why must this always be the case? I expected more from these men. Anything would have done, just to have a little variety. And, for some unexplained reason, the Territories -- just one "flip" away from the good old U.S. of A. and roughly conforming geographically to North America -- is somehow shorter, more compact. You flip over at point A, walk a few miles and flip back,

and you have traveled perhaps ten times as far. Without any attempt at an explanation, this troubled me until I just gave up and went with the flow, despite its puzzling aspects.

If it were not for the high expectations that the two authors raise by merely announcing a collaboration (NOW!, a book with as many plot twists and turns as GHOST STORY and as chilling and provocative as PET SEMATARY), this book might have been received differently. However, you can't separate the book from the hype and the authors' reputations. I enjoyed it: it created some truly fascinating characters and scenes although for the most part the tendency was towards overkill in the chills department and this resulted unfailingly in the opposite effect. Fantasy horror without emotional involvement was the offering and I didn't lose a night's sleep through the 644 pages.

Arguably, all horror is fantasy; the trick is to not let the reader in on it too soon. We knew within the first 50 pages that this book was not going to suggest that Jack Sawyer was experiencing some unspeakable evil that could be waiting for us just beyond the flickering glow of the street lamp on the next corner. And thus, the shivers were never there as strong as they should have been, given the skills of the two authors.

King and Straub have proved they can collaborate well; THE TALISMAN is a dilly of a fantasy tale. Now, let's get on with it and produce the long-awaited King and Straub thriller.

CHAOS IN LAGRANGIA

By Mack Reynolds
TOR, Mar 1984, 256 pp., \$2.95

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

This is a sequel to THE LAGRANGISTS, set 30 years or so into the future. It features several of the same characters (including Rex Bader, the last private eye) and has the same strengths and weaknesses as the earlier novel. Its characters lack depth and the situations are sometimes hard to accept, while the story is easy to read, moves along quickly, and contains much introductory material on the L-5 concept.

The Lagrange nation is stagnant, has a 95% unemployment rate, immigration from Earth has stopped, and the Communists and the right wing Sons of Liberty are bidding

to take over the fizzled utopia. Rex Bader and friends save the day by exposing the plot and develop a plan to rebuild the shattered economy by building a starship, continuing man's dreams of the stars and providing jobs for the residents of Lagrangia.

This is an unsatisfying novel by a writer who has done much better work.

THE RHYSLING ANTHOLOGY

Available from Science Fiction Poetry Association, 8350 Poole Ave, Sun Valley, CA 91352; Paperback, 28 pp., \$2.00

REVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

Ten finalists for the 1984 Rhysling Awards are included. An anthology of science fiction poetry with little rhyme or reason.



A CERTAIN SENSE OF WONDER: A BRIEF LOOK AT BARBARA HAMBLY'S THE DARMWATH TRILOGY

BY CHARLES DE LINT

It is with great delight that I bring to your attention The Darmwath trilogy by Barbara Hamblly. From the cover of the first book, THE TIME OF THE DARK (Del Rey, 1982) -- depicting a wizard complete with staff and sword sitting in some suburban kitchen quaffing a cold one, a bag of potato chips at his feet and the table behind him piled with dirty dishes -- I knew I was in for something at least a little different. This volume was followed in 1983 by THE WALLS OF AIR and THE ARMIES OF DAY-LIGHT -- both published by Del Rey and each better than the previous book.

The reason for my delight with Hamblly's trilogy is that the fantasy genre has been subjected to a great deal of adverse criticism of late -- much of it, unfortunately,

well deserved. An endless parade of interchangeable novels has been appearing on the shelves of bookstores with increasing regularity, all bearing the trappings of fantasy and promising wonder, but delivering only third-rate goods. The elements that made certain past classics the classics that they are, are being served up in this new flood of fantasies with all the originality of a TV sitcom idea-man's mentality. The few good books that will always exist are being swamped under this proliferation of endless series books, sequels and the constant babble of "more of the same."

It's almost come to the point where it's embarrassing to be caught just looking at the covers, little say admitting you read the stuff. (A quick aside here: Artist David B. Mattingly has done a commendable job of depicting not only -- gasp! -- actual scenes from the Darwath books, but he managed to leave the clothes on the women and the muscles off his men, a trend I can only hope will continue.)

Now, while an initial glance at the blurbs on Hamby's books might give the impression that this is, indeed, "more of the same," in this case appearances are deceiving. And while she still deals with many traditional fantasy motifs, she has deftly imbued them with her own sense of propriety.

We have a wizard as a central character who is neither a Gandalf clone nor a cute and/or crotchety worker of spells. Ingold Inglorian (fabulous name!) is a dark brooding, but thoroughly individual character who can stand as an equal in the company of LeQuin's Gerd or McKillip's Riddle-master. His magics are convincing and laid out before the reader as simple Zen truths, rather than requiring paragraphs of wordy exposition.

For a supernatural menace, we have a rising of the Dark, but these antagonists do not wear Darth Vader helmets (literally or figuratively) nor do they spout endless rhetoric. In fact, if I were to compare them to any past master's vision of evil, I would have to cite Lovecraft's unspeakable horrors -- though unlike Lovecraft, Hamby's creatures are detailed with startling clarity in some of the most chilling scenes I've read in recent years.

Next on the agenda are our intrepid heroes -- in this case, Gil Patterson, a scholar, and ex-biker Rudy Solis, transported from southern California into the land of Darwath. Again Hamby treats an

old motif as though it were an entirely new concept. Our protagonists are not hailed as saviors who must embark on some obligatory quest for two-and-a-half volumes or so before all's put right. Rather, their appearance in Darwath is entirely a matter of the vagaries of chance and under Hamby's expert guidance, they are portrayed as real people caught up in a bizarre situation where they simply have to make the best of it as they try to fit into Darwath society and take up the threads of their new life. And like real people, they have successes and failures in doing so.

To complete the scenario, we have a mock-medieval setting, but once more Hamby has taken the time to rationalize its existence and present it as a real and complete society. The background is as much a part of the story as the characters, enriching the major plots with beautifully conceived subplots that, as the story unfolds, prove to be inseparable from the whole.

Indeed, the entire trilogy hangs together with a singular vision. From the intricacies of courtly intrigues between the Regent Alwir and the Church of the Straight Faith, to the more political machinations between the beleaguered northern kingdoms and the southern empire, from the antipathy of the Church to those who are wizards through the turbulence that touches the many personal relationships, not a scene is wasted. It is to Hamby's credit that for all the wealth of her many varied characters and the complexities of her plotting, the reader is never left out in the cold. There's no turning back a few pages trying to figure out "Who was that again?" And the final resolution of all those 870-some pages is so perfectly conceived that when I turned the final page I could only sit back, nodding my head with a pleased look of satisfaction on my face.

The Darwath trilogy deserves an in-depth study -- especially by novice fantasists (though even some established ones could do well to take note of what its author has accomplished here). I'm hoping that Barbara Hamby will receive the recognition she deserves for this major work -- without, please God, the adulation that has served to undermine other major works in the past. She is a shining example of what can be done with the motifs and wonders that endear this genre to those of us who still seek a touch of magic in our reading.



The great body of fantasies that proliferate the market may be floundering -- in critical terms, if not in sales, more's the pity -- but thanks to Hamby and the very few other writers like her, a diligent reader can still acquire from time to time a certain sense of wonder.

A ROSE FOR ARMAGEDDON
By Hilbert Schenck
Timescape, 1982, 175 pp., \$2.50
Allison/Busby, 1984, 190 pp., \$7.95

BY THE UNKNOWN REVIEWER

This is the third book by Hilbert Schenck, a Hugo/Nebula-nominated writer in short fiction. His first two books were WAVE RIDER, a collection of stories and the novel, AT THE EYE OF THE OCEAN. This book also expresses the author's love for the sea. The Allison/Busby edition from England is his first hardcover. ROSE has a power of evocation of inner emotion that dissolves the line between imagination and reality. It is a charming work for all those who believe that love can indeed be a power in first changing the individual and then changing the world.

In the novel's first section we are placed in the mind of Dr. Elsa Adams, an unmarried professor of analytic zoology near retirement age. The time is the near future. She awakes from her terrible dream of conflagration. The dream is connected with Hawkins Island where she and Jake Strinson once made love when she was 17. Now the island is undergoing a multidisciplinary archaeological study run by her and Jake. A giant university computer, Archmorph, processes land-use data from the past and present of Hawkins Island. Jake is now a joint professor of computer science and archeology. His marriage deteriorates in direct relation to the spreading conflict and violence in the world.

Part of this work's beauty rests in the rich presentation of characterization. Jake and Elsa each have their own section where we have access to their thoughts, memories and desires. Their affair on Hawkins Island constitutes

an emergent unity of prime importance for the world's survival. Elsa is shown as a harriidan in her professional life. She describes herself as coming to the university "already as an old bull elephant ready to do battle." Jake, in contrast, is shown as an idea man who sells proposals for funding to foundations and the government. He lacks Elsa's fire and drive and is more sociable and easygoing. Unlike Elsa he has no recollection of their affair.

The analysis of Hawkins Island studies land-use patterns from the time of the island's namesake, Jonas Hawkins, onward. Jonas was a slave who bought his freedom, became a sea captain, married the daughter of his former owner, purchased the island and leased land to white tenant farmers. He is depicted so vividly that he appears to step into reality from the book's pages. The subplot that involves him and Mercy, his wife, supplies an additional dimension of characterization through human struggle. His depiction also expresses the author's fascination for the sea and those who struggle with her.

Under Jonas the island was "a working, day-to-day interracial operation." If Elsa and Jake can find the structure for the coexistence through Archmorph, they hope to defuse the pattern-determined conflict that is spreading worldwide. To solve the secret of Hawkins Island they have to find the "roses at the end of the world" and consummate their relationship.

I feel that ROSE furnishes a fulfillment that is many-petaled. The richness of the rose image will unfold to the reader long after the book's leaves are closed. The inner beauty that it reveals will produce a spectrum of warm feeling. If you enjoyed TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON you should enjoy this work as it depicts the warmth of love in human relationships as a transcendent force.

THE SEVEN TOWERS
By Patricia Wrede
Ace, 264 pp, \$2.50

REVIEWED BY JANRAE FRANK

The King's sister might be modeled on Margery Main. The sorceress Amberglas sounds like a magical Gracie Allen. Princess Crystalom could out-hayley Hayley Mills in her Disney imp days. Mix well and you have one of the most enjoyable fantasies of the year.

There are several plots intertwining in mysterious ways. King Mareth of Sevaime is busily trying to marry his son, Eltiron, off to a princess he's never met. The Hoven-Thaler nomads are migrating north to escape the Matholych which eats magic -- and every living thing in its path -- and will soon overrun the Seven Kingdoms. The Kingdoms are faced with a case of "if the nomads don't get us, the Matholych will." Meanwhile the wizard-king of Tar-Alem has a plan to stop both the Matholych and the nomads ... but that is not all he's doing as the plot thickens and all the various deceptions, intrigues and counterplots converge and emerge to reveal the true motives of all concerned.

I read it twice in as many days. Some scenes simply must be savored: The first appearance of the sorceress Amberglas; the scene where King Mareth, not satisfied with marrying off just his son, tries to force a match between his ascerbic sister, Vandaris, and a power-hungry courtier; and, of course, the final exchange between Prince Eltiron and Princess Crystalom.

THE LAND OF LAUGHS
By Jonathan Carroll
Ace, Oct 1983, 241 pp, \$2.50

REVIEWED BY RUSSELL ENGEBRETSON

THE LAND OF LAUGHS is not an easy novel to categorize. It is a

fantasy done in a contemporary setting and has nothing in common with the current glut of sword-and-sorcery novels -- nary a dragon in sight. The main character, Thomas Abbey, is not a sorcerer, but an English teacher. Abbey's goal is to write a biography of the late Marshall France, a brilliant author of children's books who shunned all publicity. The weirdness begins when Thomas Abbey and his lover, Saxony Gardner, travel to France's last residence, the small town of Galen, Missouri.

It would be difficult to summarize the action without giving away much of the plot and a capsulization would not do the story justice. Rest assured, however, that there are plenty of plot twists and interesting characters. Saxony Gardner in particular is a well-drawn female protagonist. She is strong yet sweet, idiosyncratic without being a caricature.

THE LAND OF LAUGHS is humorous at the start, but there is an undercurrent of darkness that becomes pronounced as the story unfolds. The climax is sudden and explosive and very disquieting. This one lingered in my memory long after I finished the last page.

GOLDEN WITCHBREED
By Mary Gentle
William Morrow & Company, 1984
452 pp, \$16.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

One of the best pleasures of reading a great deal in any particular category of fiction is the thrill of coming across a first-time novelist who bursts on the scene with the power and skill of an established writer. Mary Gentle's first science fiction novel, GOLDEN WITCHBREED had just that impact on me.

A stunning first effort, Gentle writes with the depth and believability associated with Frank Herbert's classic DUNE (1965) and has a lyrical prose style reminiscent of Robert Silverberg's bestseller LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE (1979).

Set on the planet Orthe, the plot is a complex combination of political intrigue and science mystery involving a wonderfully varied cast of characters and locations. The main character Lynne Christie, Earth's envoy and an empath, has just arrived as the story opens. She has been sent there to make diplomatic contact between the two cultures and recommend formal relations. Granted the oppor-



tunity to travel and get to know the Orthean people -- and they her -- she begins what turns into an epic journey. Confronted with the alien race's reluctance to accept strangers, Christie's problems soon include assassination attempts, imprisonment, escape and pursuit when she is charged by the Church as a surviving member of the feared and hated alien founding race, the Golden Witchbreed. The resulting efforts to both clear her name while understanding this seemingly pre-technological world's outward aversion to technology and her discovery of the still operational remnants of a thousands-of-years-old scientific heritage makes **GOLDEN WITCHBREED** a major novel that should be enjoyed by science fiction and mainstream readers alike.

As is the mark of any well-executed work of fiction, you hate to see those final pages turning; with **GOLDEN WITCHBREED** you've been to Orthe and are reluctant to leave so soon.

WORLDS BEYOND: THE ART OF CHESLEY BONESTELL

By Ron Miller & Frederick C.

Durant, III
Donning Starblaze, 1983, 133 pp.
8 1/2 X 11", \$14.95

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

A beautiful book on the life and work of Chesley Bonestell, who will turn 97 on January 1, 1985 (he survived the San Francisco earthquake at age 18), covers his career as illustrator, architect and special effects artist to his position as the Dean of space artists.

Bonestell became interested in astronomy at age 17, and painted Saturn as he saw it through the 12-inch telescope at Lick Observatory. He followed astronomy as an avocation then in 1944 sold a series of paintings to **LIFE** which were published in the issue of May 29. His illustrations have since appeared in many books (including the classic **THE CONQUEST OF SPACE** by Willy Ley) and in **LOOK**, **ASTOUNDING**, **SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN**, **COLLIER'S** and other magazines. Today his paintings and murals appear in planetariums and in the Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian.

WORLDS BEYOND contains over 200 Bonestell paintings, 100 in color. Many SF greats, including Robert Heinlein, Poul Anderson and Vincent Di Fate have penned tributes to Mr. Bonestell. Beyond the astronomical art, there are matte

paintings from films, landscapes, seascapes and historical art. This is a book for fans of Chesley Bonestell and for those who have not yet discovered him.

I rarely recommend purchasing such an expensive paperback, but this one is a must-have.

ON A PALE HORSE

By Piers Anthony

Ballantine/Del Rey, Hardcover
249 pp., \$12.95; Paperback 336 pp., \$2.95

REVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

Death Valley (LEAK) -- a new man has taken over the job of Death. Zane assumed the duties recently when during a suicide attempt, he noticed the old Death coming for him and instinctively turned his gun on the Grim Reaper. By the rules of the game, anyone who kills Death must take over the job himself, which is what Zane did.

Zane, who has taken to wearing Death's clothing and jewelry and driving/riding Death's car/horse, has quickly learned that his job is to take only those souls that are balanced midway between heaven and hell -- as he was himself when Death came for him. Zane has also made the acquaintance of the other Immortal Incarnations -- Fate, Time, War and Nature. Despite some initial personality conflicts it seems likely that Zane will work well with his co-Incarnations, but there are already indications that he will come into conflict with Satan, that wily old devil who would subvert Zane's purposes if he could.

Rumor has it that Zane has fallen in love with Luna, a magician's daughter whom Satan is attempting to take ahead of schedule so that she won't foul up his plans twenty

years down the line. There is even speculation that Luna's father was behind the incident that resulted in Zane getting the job in the first place. Will Death go on strike so that he won't have to take Luna, his love?

These and other incidents are covered in detail in Piers Anthony's **ON A PALE HORSE** (a paperback bestseller), the first of a five-volume series, the second of which **BEARING AN HOURGLASS**, has already been published. Other volumes in the series will be **WITH A TANGLED SKEIN**, **WIELDING A RED SWORD** and **BEING A GREEN MOTHER**. Stay tuned for further developments.

BEARING AN HOURGLASS

By Piers Anthony

Ballantine/Del Rey, Hardcover
1984, 292 pp., \$13.95

REVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

Greenwich, England (LEAK) -- the good news is that Chronos, the Incarnation of Time, has or will or might defeat Satan, the Incarnation of Evil. The bad news is that it will or has or could take him so long to do it. Maybe.

The uncertainty here involves the nature of Time and the office of Chronos, according to Norton, the man who recently took over that position. Norton who was formerly an unemployed wilderness-seeker, reports that Time is one of the most powerful of the Incarnations of Immortality, but that the limitations and complications to which it is subject make things very difficult for the office holder.

Norton reports that he has met with the other Incarnations (Death, Fate, War and Nature) and with Satan and that he has already learned a great deal in his short time in office. He has learned to use the hourglass that is the symbol of his position to travel in time/space



and perform his duties, but he's also learned that he is doomed to live backward in time, as each of his predecessors will.

Although he enjoys his work, Norton fondly remembers his life before he became Time -- back when he was a wanderer who became involved with a ghost's wife and acquired Sning, a snake ring that answers his questions with a squeeze. Norton also enjoys double dating with Clotho, an aspect of Fate, together with Zane, who is Death incarnate and Luna, the magician's daughter who has/will become a senator and thwart Satan's plans.

There are some critics who complain that the account of Norton's adventures told in Piers Anthony's BEARING AN HOURGLASS is unnecessarily burdened by the scenes in which Norton battles the Bems and the Evil Sorceress and that the reversal-of-time scenario was too drawn out. Nevertheless, the Anthony book is a fine piece of writing, the second volume of the Incarnations of Immortality series which will run to five incarnations. More to come.

THE NIGHT OF THE RIPPER
By Robert Bloch
Doubleday, 227 pp, 1984, \$14.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

The thick fog swirled around the lamppost in London's lower East Side; darkened doorways yawned out at passersby like gaping mouths; shadowy figures darted down the cobblestone streets, ever watchful for the dark-cloaked man wearing the deerstalker cap and carrying the small parcel or bag in his right hand. It was London, England in 1888 and the night belonged to the Ripper.

Robert Bloch, author of PSYCHO and many other horror novels has fashioned a fascinating tale of terror around the known facts of the crimes attributed to Jack the Ripper. Told from the P.O.V. of Mark Robinson, an American doctor studying in England, the story weaves together a taut mystery that examines the motivations and impacts of one of history's most celebrated unsolved "serial murders" (as modern-day criminologists refer to them).

The London of the late nineteenth century is a teeming city of seven million on the brink of change: A modern Scotland Yard organization linked by telephone is soon to be implemented; for now, however, the police must grapple with this despicable crime through

a network of old and almost independent station houses connected only by telegraph and message runners. Bloch cleverly blends into his fictitious account other well-known personages from London of the period including playwright George Bernard Shaw, novelists Oscar Wilde and Conan Doyle and John Merrick, better known as "The Elephant Man."

In an earlier short story, "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" (1943), Bloch first touched on the subject; now, forty years later, he expands this theme into a full-length novel filled with the depth and detail of early London. Using the device of an American as the main character he is able to offer interesting and informative contrast between England and the United States during this time. His writing style is purely chronological with one-scene chapters that move the story through the horrible days -- and frightening nights -- when the Ripper had all of London looking over their shoulders.

Bloch very skillfully brings the story to a satisfying -- and I should add historically consistent -- ending that is both surprising and logical. THE NIGHT OF THE RIPPER is not the kind of novel that makes your scalp crawl; rather, the author has created a refreshing re-telling of well-covered occurrences that should be enjoyed by horror and mystery readers alike.



MOON-FLASH
By Patricia A. McKillip
Argo, Sept 1984, 150 pp., \$10.95

REVIEWED BY CHARLES DE LINT

The protagonists of Patricia McKillip's books are questioners, seekers, riddlers. From Morgan in THE RIDDLE-MASTER OF HED and Frances Stuart in STEPPING FROM THE SHADOWS to the young Kyroel of McKillip's newest novel MOON-FLASH, the great and small mysteries of the world drive her characters to search and question, to stretch the known and explore the unknown. The answers that they find are intensely personal, but contain universal truths and insights that echo with as much depth for McKillip's readers as they do her characters. And the depth of those echoes is directly related to how

much the reader has brought of her or himself to the book.

MOON-FLASH is a short novel, but it has a resonance to sustain it that many longer works lack. It is like a haiku in its simple purity and hides its wisdoms in the meat of its nuts like the fabled acorn or hazelnut. A casual scrutiny reveals a coming-of-age story for young adults and on that level MOON-FLASH is a lovely work. But there is more to be found -- and not necessarily through scholarly study of analogies and metaphor -- in the flow of its language as it speaks on many levels, in the depths of its characters and their true growth as the narrative progresses, in the careful layering of what is with what must be and what was hoped for.

There are no simple answers to the mysteries of the world -- neither the great ones, nor the small ones -- and few signposts to point the way beyond one's having a questioning mind and a willingness to brave the unknown. McKillip's work is one of those rare signposts and MOON-FLASH is a beautiful example of what can be done within the framework of fiction, proving that a strong storyline need not be sacrificed for depth. Highly recommended.

THE REENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD
By Morris Berman
Bantam, 304 pp +52 pp notes & glossary; cover art Diane Dillon, \$4.95

REVIEWED BY PAUL MCGUIRE

This book is a serious text questioning the basis of modern man's whole epistemology. It presents not a new philosophy, idea or system, but rather a different way of forming philosophies, ideas and systems.

Mr. Berman believes a division occurred in the 16th Century in meaning, a split between the fact or thing and the value of the fact or thing. With very high academic and intellectual levels, this book does an impressive job of convincing the reader as to how and why this split occurred, what it was and what the effects have been. And he believes those effects have been overwhelmingly drastic.

Prior to the political triumph of the Cartesian paradigm as the metaphysical world view and method of thinking, Mr. Berman states that mankind had a "participating consciousness." He was always part of every phenomenon of which he was aware. Modern non-participat-

ing consciousness supplanted the former mode. It held that phenomena should be broken down and analyzed in parts from a completely detached view. What could not be empirically proved was unimportant or did not exist. Rational thought became biased on a separation of consciousness from the universe, with objective analysis the ideal even in intimate person-to-person interaction.

Mr. Berman continues, due to the artificiality of Man's construct of perception and thought, he has paid a high price, perhaps the breakdown of the human spirit and in an unreasonable backlash, the coming abandonment of science and technology. Mr. Berman does not advocate a return to animism or occult world views. Although he finds that participating consciousness is greatly superior to modern paradigms, he does not fail to recognize great achievements which could only have come via the latter. Using the work and career of Gregory Bateson as a main source, he proposes a joining of the two forms of consciousness into a third epistemology, one of holistic mental comfort, where humans participate fully in life with no clear distinction between mental, emotional and physical realms; and yet effortlessly may use the analytical mode of thought as a tool for specific functions.

Up to this point, (about 90% of the book), Mr. Berman had been fascinating, thought-provoking and (for the most part) convincing. In the final section, where he moves into purely personal speculation as to the complete paradise which would instantly appear if people adopted this new epistemology, he loses credibility. Yet that is a minor discordant note intended as a crescendo after a brilliant symphony of ideas. Rarely obtuse or heavy, Mr. Berman deals with difficult concepts in a style which uses words extremely well to present his challenging outlook.

DINOSAUR TALES
by Ray Bradbury
Bantam, 144 pp, 1984, \$2.50

REVIEWED BY JOHN DIPRETE

During his career, Ray Bradbury has turned out a number of memorable short stories in some way related to dinosaurs and/or the prehistoric era. Probably the most notable, included here in DINOSAUR TALES, concerns a time-traveling expedition exploring the tundra of the Mesozoic Era to



shoot down the Tyrant Lizard and other beasts. Of course, the primeval jungle has been time-surveilled to determine which monster should be destroyed; only foredoomed and clearly-marked (in red paint-bomb!) prey serve as Time Safari, Inc. target creatures. (The future is very careful about preserving the pristine sanctity of Father Time -- lest alternate time streams bubble and froth unsupposedly.)

A metallic Path floating six inches above the mud and grasses prevents the time travelers from straying off into the flora and fauna of this steamy, tropical Dark Age. The theory behind such red tape goes thusly: if you were to accidentally step on a bug or something somewhere in the dirt, you may wind up imprinting your "history stamp" on millenia-to-come. Who -- a simple bug, you say? Yep! 'Cause that plain, dumb ol' bug could -- in the scheme of things -- make mashed potatoes of Destiny. Didja ever consider the bug's future progeny? 'Twould be wiped out, 'cause you destroyed their sole, would-be ancestor. Not only that, how 'bout the creatures that would have lived on that one bug's great-great-great-etc. grandchildren? Never-to-be, 'cause your foot got 'em. And so on. Time-wise, no man (viz, bug) is an island.

In any case, the author has set up a fine thesis, and the story takes off when a son-of-a-bitch hunter goes off, half-cocked into the tundra -- against orders. The events which follow sew up an excellent time yarn, in the grandest of time-quirk tradition.

The rest of the stories in this collection offer additional good, dinosaur-related reading. Being a Byron Preiss book, the stories are rather heavily illustrated by artists like William Stout (no dinosaur volume could not include him), Moebius (of Heavy Metal fame), Gahan Wilson (lord, talk about variety of styles!), Steranko (Yes, Steranko), Kenneth Smith and others.

A recommended story and art collection for Bradbury and/or dinosaur fans.



DEMONS OF THE DANCING GODS
By Jack Chalker
Ballantine, 1984, 257 pp, \$3.75

REVIEWED BY W. RITCHIE BENEDICT

As a writer, I usually prefer books by Jack L. Chalker when he is in a light mood. When he is in a deadly serious mood, some of his works are just that -- deadly. Fortunately, with this second book in a promising fantasy series, he is in fine fettle.

I have not read the first book RIVER OF THE DANCING GODS, but the plot revolves around two characters, a truck driver named Joe and a waitress called Marge who are spirited away into a magic world just minutes before they are destined to die on a Texas highway. The master magician who abducts them is one Throckmorton P. Ruddy-gore (Chalker must be either a W.C. Fields or Gilbert and Sullivan fan to come up with a name like that). He brought them to the world of Husaquah to engage in a battle with the Dark Baron and a Demon Prince. Joe undergoes a transformation into a Conan-esque barbarian while Marge starts to turn into a fairy woman (shape-shifting is a standard theme for a Chalker novel).

As the sequel opens, the Baron and his demonic pal are down but not out. Marge decides to seek out the rest of her new people -- the Kauri -- in order to finish her conversion into whatever-it-is-she-is-turning-into. Meanwhile Ruddy-gore, who has an ability to travel between worlds, plans to attend a big convention of sorcerers and magicians. The Dark Baron plans to turn up, but because he will be disguised as one of the participants, no one will know who he really is until it is too late.

Neither Marge nor Joe particularly trust Ruddygore completely, suspecting as they do that he may have some imperial ambitions to rule Husaquah himself. However, they really have no alternative but to trust him at least until one of the six suspects on the Council of Thirteen is unmasked. Joe meets Tiana who is thirsting for revenge against her father's usurper, a magician by the name of Kalandon. Tiana has spent some time on Earth Prime -- in Switzerland to be exact, so the two expatriates have a good deal in common.

The big Convention bears a certain suspicious resemblance to those well-known science fiction conventions well beloved by fandom -- but of course we know there is no comparison, don't we? Kalandon appears to be too obvious a suspect, the Dark Baron may be female this time -- the witch Esmer-

ada perhaps or even an obvious white magician such as Count Esmlino Boquillas. Somewhere there is a connection with Earth Prime -- the kobolds have been absorbing the ideas of Lenin.

Meanwhile, Joe has run into an unsuspected problem -- he has been bitten by a were-Pekingese and because of his unique background, stands to turn into whatever he is in close proximity to! Luckily, this only happens during the full moon, but that is enough. There is a duel of sorcerers and a tour of the less savory aspects of our Earth's history, as well as much more. This is not the end either -- there is a promise of a third book still to come.

If one of his characters was infected by a were-virus, I suspect that Mr. Chalker must have been bitten by a were-Piers Anthony. This book is close in tone and with its sense of humor to something that Anthony might have written. It also bears a nodding resemblance to the earlier Chalker book AND THE DEVIL WILL DRAG YOU UNDER.

Normally, I prefer hard science fiction to fantasy, but the light mood of this novel is very infectious. It quite literally casts a spell that you will find hard to resist. Although the ingredients are familiar it makes for fun reading. Jack Chalker has a definite winner in this one. There is no sag as is often the case with the middle book in a trilogy.



DESCENT FROM XANADU
By Harold Robbins

Simon/Schuster, 310 pp., \$15.95

REVIEWED BY PAUL MCGUIRE

The popularity of ETAR WARS, CESK and their offspring has had a cosmetic effect on mainstream fiction. For example: Mr. Robbins' latest novel of the racy rich has pseudo-science bandied about, experiments (one of which gives the protagonist a permanent erection), and two super-science

cities built (one underground next to a volcano deep in the Amazon jungle), while the hero (who could have bought and sold Howard Hughes) searches for immortality. Despite all that, this book is really fantasy, Mr. Robbins' ultra-rich as demi-gods wet dream running amok. So ludicrous is it all, that this work could have been good-bad trashy fun if not sooooo bloody awfully written, and also that we seem to be expected to take the nonsense and the prose seriously.

PALIMPSESTS

By Carter Scholz & Glenn Harcourt
Ace, 1984, \$2.95

REVIEWED BY DEAN R. LAMBE

When writers speak of geological features "rhyming" with meteorological aspects, the reader must be prepared for extraordinary prose -- or sheer pretension. Scholz & Harcourt give us both, with layer upon layer of meaning as one might expect from the title.

The plot, if there is one, is very simple. Hans Camus, failed grad student on three continents, and perhaps the bastard grandson of the Camus, labors cynically at a paleontological dig in Germany's Neander Valley. Professor Warner, "the Carl Sagan of anthropology" in 1991, seems to have set his students to a fruitless task, for Homo S. neanderthalensis hadn't been a "new man" in that valley for decades. Also, Warner is shackled up with Camus' sometime love, Winifred Waste. But an amazingly complete skeleton is found, alongside an impossible metal cube, a cube precisely 2 cm on a side, heavier than platinum, and of technologically unfathomable alloys.

Could that cube have been buried for 80,000 years or is it more grist for Warner's infamous THE BOOK OF FAKES? One scientist suicides, Camus feels time is out of joint and he and Waste return home to Cleveland. Enter the heavies, a pair of erudite agents at some educational distance from Central Casting. Camus and Waste are pursued on a mad drive to Seattle, with stops to visit California glacier sculptors, and the game continues: Cube, cube, who's got the cube. Action shifts by snow boat to Alaska, where all characters are reunited as Camus descends existentially, through Dante's seven circles (the ice is on top this time, and the circles are seven-sided). Numerous scientific disciplines are thrashed with a prosaic (meaning 2.) flair last

seen in FINNEGANS WAKE, until the snake bites its own tail and the cube is back on its home square in the great cosmic chess game.

Pity the usual denizen of SF cons, for a working knowledge of five languages, and a handful of Master's degrees will enhance appreciation of this twisted novel. It's not, in fact, untill about page 140 that SF elements even enter, and then they are quickly lost in metaphysics. Again, Terry Carr has presented a "Science Fiction Special" and the reader must ask whether all that son et lumiere was worth the candle. Like Albert Camus' Stranger, I'm not sure when it died. C.J. Cherryh's WAVE WITHOUT A SHORE had a lot more fun with this philosophy. Nice try, guys.

ARIEL

By Jack M. Bickham
St. Martin's, 1984, 316 pp., \$15.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

She was witty, clever -- genius level, undoubtedly -- and she performed her job with speed and accuracy; yet nobody was really friendly with her. Until late that night when Ariel called Rusty on the telephone no one had even given a thought to what might interest her outside of Drum Laboratories. And this would cause quite a stir once others found out. After all, Rusty was the company President's 13-year-old son. And Ariel was a computer.

ARIEL, a novel by Jack M. Bickham, is a fascinating glimpse into the near future when mankind may well have to reassess what constitutes their humanity as a generation of super computers come "on line." Computers so smart they possess an intelligence indistinguishable from man, with the exception that the machine intelligence will likely be far superior. It all depends on your definition.

Bickham has fashioned a fast-paced story around one of the most exciting areas of work in computers: the threshold of true artificial intelligence (AI). The search for AI is portrayed as a quest; the nation that obtains it first will surely make a quantum leap into the future comparable to the harnessing of atomic energy. The country that controls AI -- if indeed "control" is the correct word -- will have a power capable of solving the problems that have plagued human progress: weather, disease, energy, space travel. Anything may be possible when the awesome computational power of a

super computer, able to process the vast wealth of stored knowledge in nanoseconds and make intuitive decisions, is focused on a particular problem.

As a craftsman, Bickham has infused his story of the quest with a believably complicated plot involving industrial espionage, murder, chicanery and romance through which he deftly weaves his finely-etched characters. The main character, John Harrington, head of Drum Labs, is a man whose dream of developing AI is threatened by the difficulties of a failing company. The Lab has suffered recent setbacks in the highly competitive computer market complicated by the huge amounts of cash he has poured into his pet project.

Rusty, his son, is a precocious young man who would rather tap in to Dad's mainframe computer late at night than play baseball in the daytime. Harrington has been frantically working on his project against a bankruptcy deadline, yet Rusty learns of his success first.

ARIEL is a compelling novel that takes the reader to the cutting edge of high-tech and human drama, a story that raises some questions we may all be faced with before we are ready to answer them. The style is purely chronological: Once you have started you won't stop until you have reached the suspenseful conclusion. This is a book for mainstream and science fiction taste alike: Bickham is an excellent writer who has told a warm and human tale about the ultimate machine.

ANALOG: WRITERS' CHOICE, VOL 11
Edited by Stanley Schmidt
Dial Press, 1984, \$12.95

UNIVERSE 14
Edited by Terry Carr
Doubleday, 1984, \$11.95

THE CLARION AWARDS
Edited by Damon Knight
Doubleday, 1984, \$11.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

If you haven't had a chance to read every issue of ANALOG for the past forty-nine years (ANALOG: WRITERS' CHOICE), if you want to take a quick survey of potential 1984 Hugos (UNIVERSE 14), or if you would like to see what the newest talent on the SF scene has to offer (THE CLARION AWARDS), three new anthologies out this summer are sure to please.

ANALOG magazine (previously called ASTOUNDING) has been one of the major showcases for "hard" SF

from the Golden Age of science fiction into the present. Under the tutelage of one of its most famous editors, John W. Campbell, many of the members of today's SF Parthenon got their start here.

WRITERS' CHOICE approaches an anthology in a unique manner: The writers choose their favorite story that appeared in ASTOUNDING/ANALOG and explain why they picked it in a foreword. Editor Stanley Schmidt's (current editor of ANALOG, as if you didn't know) task was to select from the many writers who have appeared in this magazine over the years. Not an easy job!

This second volume contains stories by present editor Schmidt and former editor Ben Bove (both regular contributors before becoming editors) as well as an excellent selection from such authors as Isaac Asimov, Frank Herbert, Hal Clement, Robert Heinlein and six others.

The book gives the reader a microscopic look at SF through the pages of one of its leading magazines (stories from 1934 to 1983) and is a real treat. Perhaps as interesting to the die-hard fan as the stories themselves will be the authors' forewords where they tell why they selected that story and how it has affected their careers.

In UNIVERSE 14, Terry Carr once again proves why he has been one of the most successful editors of original anthologies in recent years by presenting ten carefully chosen stories that should satisfy the wide range of SF taste.

Despite the recent commercial success of several SF novelists lately, the short form remains a mainstay of the genre. It's not an easy length: Characters and plot must be deftly blended into a lean prose style that carries the reader along to their conclusion with few, if any, lulls or pauses allowed.

Carr has assembled an interesting mix this time out from the established names such as Silverberg and Knight to some newcomers such as Pat Murphy and Mary Gloss, among others. There are no clinkers here but for a unique treatment of the well-explored future-war theme I found Pat Murphy's "Art in the War Zone" left a lasting impression. A pacifist enclave of artists locked in a struggle with real soldiers. Here symbolism and psychology is matched against bullets and brute force and the outcome changes both sides.

The Clarion Science Fiction Writer's Workshop, an intense sum-

mer program, began in 1968 at Clarion College in Pennsylvania and is now situated at Michigan State University. Each year the workshop has provided twenty hand-picked and highly motivated students an opportunity to attend and put themselves in the pressure cooker for six weeks. And, they do this voluntarily! THE CLARION AWARDS is a collection of fourteen stories by Clarion graduates between 1976 and 1982 who had not yet been published as of the date of the announcement (the previous years were covered in CLARION, 1977, edited by Kate Wilhelm).



Damon Knight, editor of this anthology and the successful ORBIT series has a keen eye for new talent and presents us with an interesting and diverse collection. Some of the stories are powerful, straight-ahead SF (Gary Shockley's "The Coming of the Goonga") while others are more subtle, psychological studies (Shepard's "The Ethnic Transmitter"). Several are neither SF nor fantasy to show the range of work done at Clarion.

All of these stories may not please you equally; perhaps no collection could. However, they are all filled with the energy and enthusiasm for writing that is the mark of an amateur who will not likely remain an unknown for too long.



THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

BELOVED EXILE

By Parke Godwin
Bantam, 1984, 422 pp., \$6.95

It used to be, back when there was no fantasy category to speak of that fantasies had to be marketed as something else in order to get published. The Arthurian stories (T.H. White's, or those of the now forgotten Dorothy James Roberts, or many others) were passed off as historicals. Other fantasies were labeled science fiction or children's fiction or even "fables." (The "fable" being, in the hands of a publishing copywriter, the most useful of vague terms by which works of imagination can be displayed in public with some pretense of utilitarian, moral value so as to not offend the American Protestant Work Ethic of Literature.)

But times have changed. Now fantasy is a strong category, and the market for serious fiction is vanishingly small. There are a lot of books published today as fantasy which would have been "historicals" in the 1950s: Evangeline Walton's *THE SWORD IS FORGED* is the best example, but the same is true of Elizabeth Lynn's *THE WATCH-TOWER* and sequels, for all they are set in imaginary lands. Leslie Barringer's *GERFALCON*, JORIS OF *THE ROCK*, etc. have vaguely unhistorical medieval settings and only the barest trace of supernaturalism. They were published as historicals in the 1920s and not subsumed into the fantasy field until Newcastle reprinted them as fantasy in the 1970s. Today you can be quite sure, if Mary Renault were submitting her *Theseus* books for the first time, they would be published as fantasy.

And now we have an example of a leading science fiction and fantasy line giving a heavy promotion to a Big Book, clearly aimed at the fantasy market and a probable contender for fantasy awards, for all that it is not a fantasy at all. Of course, these categories mean nothing in the long run and good writing will survive marketing considerations, but in the short run it means people who buy *BELOVED EXILE* looking for a fantasy (or even more, for the sort

of comforting brain-massage known technically as the "elfy-welfy story") are in for a shock. And what remains of the historical fiction audience won't find it at all.

The historical elements are admittedly speculative, but then they always are in a novel set in a poorly-chronicled period. This one is about the adventures of Guenevere after the death of Arthur. The historical basis is roughly as follows: The Saxons overran Britain, but about A.D. 500 the Britons must have won a great victory. Otherwise the Saxons would have prevailed all the sooner. There is no reason to disbelieve that this victory occurred at a place called Badon Hill, or that the leader who briefly united the squabbling Celtic kinglets might have been named Arthur or Artorius, or something like that. There are scraps of historical, literary and archeological evidence about life in this period, but not much is known. So the author has to make up a lot, even as he would when writing about the political scene in Ur of the Chaldees, or in pre-Columbian North America. This, to my mind, is not enough to make a novel fantasy.

Actually, the shock the elfy-welfy story readers are going to get from this might do them good. They'll be introduced to medieval realism in all its grubby particulars, not to mention superb writ-

ing and the sort of intensely significant and emotionally awesome events which turn into myths.

You will not forget this book or be readily able to lay it aside. Godwin's Guenevere, who narrates the story, is a superbly-realized character, and she and her world come totally alive. Much of the meaning of the book depends on the differing textures of two societies, those of the post-Roman Britons and of the Saxons, and it takes a very sure authorial hand to make all this work. If the characterization were a little less good, or Godwin a little less imaginative in the best sense of the word, his Britons and Saxons would just be ciphers in costumes, and the book would be one long capture/escape/bondage extravaganza. But instead we have a Guenevere who is very much a part of the dying society she is trying to hold together, set upon by vicious nobles who hardly give Arthur's corpse a chance to cool and eventually taken into slavery among the Saxons. It is the Saxon sequence which is a real revelation, both to Guenevere and to the reader. The viewpoint shift is total. Previously, the Saxons were seen as cruel, invading barbarians, but from within their own society they come off rather like American pioneers, brave, stolid, hardworking people who are determined to carve a new life for themselves and their children out of the wilderness. Like the American pioneers, their backs



are to the sea. There is nowhere to go but forward. They transcend mere desperation and achieve heroic stature (including even especially a cranky old Saxon grandmother who tries to be the real power behind her son the chief), the tragedy being that, like the American pioneers regarding the Indians, they can't afford to stop and consider that the Britons may be anything more than particularly smart predators, just another danger to be overcome. Seeing it from both sides, Guenevere comes to understand the humanity of the Saxons, and even to admire them. She sees that their laws are more democratic, and that this means that every man has a stake in society, whereas among the Britons there are only treacherous, increasingly shabby nobles trying to live off the desperately poor peasantry.

I don't want to make the book sound like a lecture or abstraction. All of this is illustrated in vivid, intensely dramatic scenes with more feeling than I have encountered in a novel of any sort in a long time. All the characterizations, even the very minor ones, are very good. Godwin has the essential storyteller's ability: the knack of grabbing the reader by the throat and dragging him along. He makes you care. After that, everything else falls into place: the intelligence of his historical speculations, his sense of detail, his lucid and powerful prose.

I don't like the ending. In the end, just as the evil King Constantine is about to have Guenevere executed, two sets of cavalry come to the rescue, not merely her British followers, but the band of Saxons with whom she lived for ten years. This is contrived. It reminds me of those movies (usually historical epics or Westerns) in which all the contending parties come together, practically in a parade, and stand around while the main characters resolve everything into a nice, neat, symbolic package.

Everything is resolved, but the author's hand is too obvious, where previously the action of the book had a life of its own. Then, in an epilogue, the story is alive again, very movingly, as Guenevere, now past ninety and nearly blind, returns to Britain for the last time.

This is a wonderful book. For all the categorization may be deceptive, it is hard to fault the editor who bought it (presumably Lou Aronica) for refusing to pass it up on the grounds that it did not quite "fit" into his line.

THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARDS,
VOLUME #2
Edited by George R.R. Martin
Bluejay Books, 1984, 244 pp, \$7.95

This is quite a disappointing book, and I think its fault may be in the initial conception. Each Campbell memorial volume is supposed to consist of original stories by all the award nominees for a single year. This present one features the 1977 nominees. That means there are only four or five potential contributors per volume. Martin himself has mentioned that the novelists have taken over the John Campbell Memorial Award. Fans read so few magazines that a short story writer seldom has the exposure required. So we have a book drawn from four or five people who don't write short fiction regularly. The editor is at their mercy.

Jack Chalker puts in a competent neo-pulpish performance with "In The Dowai Chambers." A group of broadly-characterized adventurers find a mysterious alien maze in the desert. It is a kind of memory recorder, which causes the people trapped inside to relive past lives. There are suitable surprises and revelations. I'd give the story a B. It is at least far superior to M.A. Foster's "Dreams," which is a total muddle of seemingly endless descriptions of a futuristic highway system and sex scenes. I haven't read Foster's novels, but it hardly makes me want to seek them out. One hopes they are considerably better and that the problem is merely that the editor of this series is stuck with the productions of four or five people, unless he wants to publish blank pages.

The only short story writer represented is Carter Scholz whose novelet length "The Catastrophe Machine" may be the longest solo piece he has written. (His first novel, PALIMPSESTS, is a collaboration with Glenn Harcourt.) It is a quite well-written, moody character study, not science fiction at all, but a story which makes use of scientific concepts and imagery for metaphorical reasons. Very dense, synoptic, with what little dialogue there is punctuated in the French manner (initial dashes rather than quotation marks) to make it seem more avant-garde. But there is something very conservative about Scholz's avant-gardism, in both style and subject matter. This story is basically one long whine about the unfulfilled life of a young genius. In the end he and his father come to some sort of conclusion about how

awful everything is. The "catastrophe machine" of the title is ultimately life itself. It is a tribute to Scholz's ability that he manages to make his characters believable. His observations about the often very subtle shifts in their lives seem very true. But the story is little more than a superior Malzberg pastiche. Barry has written this story dozens of times. So have other people. Scholz, for all his obvious ability and sensitivity, is caught in the very late New Wave era, endlessly rewriting the stories of ten years ago. He still hasn't found his own voice.

Finally, we have C.J. Cherryh's "Companions" which reads like the dismembered trunk of a novel. It's an other-planetary ROBINSON CRUSOE with a robot Friday, and a large dollop of the nature mysticism common to such stories. (Marooned Earthman subtly comes into transcendent contact with the ineffable. Is he mad? Are they really there at all?) Frankly, Cherryh writes well but the story never finds its focus and Algernon Blackwood did it all better (minus the robot) in "The Willows" over fifty years ago.

The only first-rate story in the book is another one by Cherryh, "The Dark King," an elegant fable of ancient Greece. It is a reprint.

THE CONGLOMEROID COCKTAIL PARTY
By Robert Silverberg
Arbor House, 1984, 284 pp, \$14.95

Silverberg is coasting. This is the most salient characteristic of the third phase of his career. From the beginning until 1962 or so, he was the ultimate pulp writer, who could be totally relied upon to turn out that novelet by Tuesday and make it, while not exactly great, certainly publishable. He has probably written more science fiction than anyone else, the only serious contenders for the honor being Henry Kuttner and Edmond Hamilton. And he did most of it during that first phase. Then after a pause, during which he produced some excellent popular science books mostly on archeological subjects, he returned still prolific, to turn out some of the finest work the field has ever seen, all in an amazing decade, roughly 1965-75. There followed another pause, his "retirement," which ended with LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE.

The present book collects most of his post-retirement short stories. They have been published in OMNI, PLAYBOY, PENTHOUSE and some of the science fiction magazines (IASFM and AMAZING). I am sure that he got more for some of

them than he did initially for many of his best novels. But alas, it seems that Phase Three Silverberg is only a mixture of Phases One and Two. The stories are very slick, very polished, and often deal with substantial matters, but at the same time they are perfunctory. Not one of them shows a trace of the intensity of "Born With the Dead" or "Nightwings" or "Schwartz Between the Galaxies." We have lots of time travel stories, ranging from gimmicks to subtle metaphors. There is mysticism and religion (including the well-received "The Pope of the Chimps") and even a quite interesting non-SF story about an empty man desperately seeking a spiritual experience among a Middle Eastern mushroom cult ("One Thousand Paces Along the Via Dolorosa"), but again, while the writing can't be faulted, the story is seriously lacking in passion and conviction.

One gets the impression of a very skilled writing giving the editors what they've paid for and nothing more.

STARS IN MY POCKETS LIKE GRAINS OF SAND By Samuel R. Delany
Bantam, 1984, 368 pp., \$16.95

Okay, I give up. This will probably be the last Delany fiction book I will read or review. I have come to the conclusion that the magical writer from the '60s of that name, the author of BABEL-17, THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION, and NOVA was, as much as Richard Brautigan was, completely a product of that era. He no longer exists. He has been replaced by a word-processing program that rewrites and rewrites, until, like in an overdone computer graphic, nothing is left but a solid screen.

The old Delany had many wonderful characteristics, all of which have now disappeared. Remember when he was regarded as a great stylist? Nowadays, this is his idea of a sentence:

Perhaps because, with the Family trying to establish the dream of a classic past as pictured on a world that may never have existed in order to achieve cultural stability, and with the Synn committed to the living interaction and difference between each woman and each world from which the right stability and play may flow, in a universe where both information and misinformation are constantly suspect, reviewed and drifting as they must be (constantly) by and between the two, a moment when either information

or misinformation turns out to be harmless must bloom, when surrounded by the workings of desire and terror, into the offered sign all about it, making and marking all about it innocent by contamination. (p.86)

That is actually a microcosm of the entire novel. Delany (the new Delany, not the writer) has become so obsessed with the little nuances of the words in that sentence that the thought is lost. He has become so obsessed with the little nuances of detail in the book that the novel is lost. Every paragraph seems clogged with dead matter, usually half a dozen opaque lines toward the end. This forces the reader to skim (How far did I get? 115 pages. Few people I know got beyond the prologue. When I found I couldn't read more than two pages a day, I stopped.), but skimming is no help. There is nothing there, only a great mound of detail. Delany has been working on this book for something like ten years, occasionally publishing excerpts from the work-in-progress (some of which aren't in the book), so we may assume that the discontinued vestiges of a

ing the imagined literature of the future and its use of metaphors derived from not-yet-extant technology. But the writing is appalling, and the book is not worth struggling through, except perhaps for writers who might want to mine it. There are ideas and ruins of ideas here which, in the hands of a fiction writer, could be turned into intriguing stories.

Michael Moorcock once commented disparagingly that "Delany is a pulp writer." I only wish this were true. No pulp writer could be this bad. He has gotten to the point where he could take lessons from Homer Bon Flint. Were this not such a melancholy occasion (easily the worst alleged novel ever published by a major writer in our field) it would be the subject for jokes. When DIALGREN came out, "Far far did you get?" was all the rage as a fannish parlor game. Now: "How bad is it? It's so bad it makes Heinlein's I WILL FEAR NO EVIL look like...like an early Delany novel." And I was hoping against hope that this one, at last, would be more like Delany's FRIDAY, if not up to his old standard, at least a partial return to form. But no, that is not going to happen.

The only thing that could cause his career as a novelist to resume would be for an editor to be in a strong enough position to say no, to not merely reject the book, but turn it over to a staff of five or six other editors, have all of them go over it with several miles of red ink, crossing out opaque and unnecessary sections, demanding explanations for every vague phrasing (Did they cause the classic past to exist in order to achieve cultural stability? Or did the planet "never exist in order to achieve cultural stability"? That is, was it set up for some special purpose? What does all this mean anyway?), and perhaps discovering a focus, deciding which character is the protagonist, from which viewpoint the story should be written, etc. Maybe if they forced him to rewrite it on that scale, so that virtually none of the present, hideously garbled text survived, Delany might rediscover something of what a novel is, and how it is constructed. But you know that isn't going to happen. Once an author has passed a certain threshold, no editor has that kind of power over him.

So we must fondly remember Samuel Delany, the science fiction writer, whose career lasted a bare seven years, 1962-69.

(Richard Geis Note: See my review of the new Delany novel in my column, "Not Necessarily Reviews" elsewhere in this issue.)

THIS IS ACTUALLY MY
DOCTORAL THESIS ON
LITERARY DECONSTRUCTION
IMPURGATED WITH ENOUGH
SEX AND VIOLENCE
TO SELL LIKE
HOTCAKES!



STARS MY DESTINATION-derivative plot are a holdover from the period in which the old Delany's career came to an end.

To be fair, some of the old intelligence remains. There is a lot of good science fictional thinking present. It is put to no use, but there are interesting ramifications of a vast increase in the amount of information available to an individual (the characters here are as far beyond a modern computer user as the computer user is beyond a caveman), and there is even a fascinating page-and-a-half treat-

NON-FICTION:

WONDER'S CHILD

By Jack Williamson
Bluejay Bks, 1984, 276 pp, \$15.95

Jack Williamson is science fiction's leading survivor. When you stop and consider that he is a contemporary of Ed Earl Repp, David H. Keller, Stanton Coblenz, Edwin K. Sloat, A. Hyatt Verrill, and countless other faded names of the pulp era, and he is still publishing respectable SF today, it is apparent that there is something quite unusual about the man and his career. There are other Gernsback era writers who are still alive, but how many are still viable in the marketplace?

Some of the secret may simply be that Williamson never stopped learning. His very charming and unassuming autobiography is full of learning experiences. In the 1930s he underwent psycho-analysis because he was unsatisfied with his life and wanted to do something about it. (One thought that comes to mind is that his background was even more narrow and isolated than Robert E. Howard's and similar in many ways, but Williamson was willing to open himself up and discover the world where Howard rejected it.) In the 1950s he finished his education and took up the academic life, learning a new profession. Later, he went to one of the Milford conferences because, as he casually puts it, he felt his skills needed sharpening. This from a man who was even then one of the senior talents in the field.

His autobiography spans whole technological eras, literally from covered wagons to spaceships and tells something, though not everything, about a rich and varied life. Williamson's manner is alternately introspective and reserved, but he has many insights and interesting details which make the book a valuable document, both for the understanding of his own work, and as literary and social history.

**THE DARK BARBARIAN,
THE WRITINGS OF ROBERT E. HOWARD**
Edited by Don Herron
Greenwood Press, 1984, 242 pp,
\$29.95

While there will never be a vast, creeping glacier of books about Robert E. Howard, the way there is about Lovecraft, there are three volumes which are essential to the understanding of the man and his work: GlemLord's *THE LAST CELT*, which contains useful autobiographical material by Howard, and the standard Howard bibliography *DARK VALLEY DESTINY* by de Camp, de Camp and Griffin, the definitive

biography; and now this.

THE DARK BARBARIAN is, quite simply, the finest critical anthology I have ever read. It has none of the academic fustiness usually associated with such volumes. All the articles are well written and more important, all of them are genuinely insightful, even arresting in their insights. This is not production for the Ph. D. mill. These people have something to say.

The best of the lot is Herron's own "The Dark Barbarian" which analyzes Howard's creation of a mythic figure, his cultural impact and the growing differences between the original conceptions and what now passes as Conan, et al. Fritz Leiber gives a sound overview of Howard's fantasy. Ben Indick covers the westerns with the charm and incisiveness typical of him. He puts Howard's western fiction into the larger context of his work more capably than anyone has ever done before. Steve Eng contributes a major article on Howard's poetry. While the de Camps made groundbreaking use of the poetry as a biographical tool, this is the first really thorough examination of the whole body of Howard's verse. Dennis Rickard concludes that Howard's use of supernaturalism was actually derivative and often unsuccessful. Indeed, Howard's main inclinations were else-

where, as George Knight tells us in a quite startling piece, "Robert E. Howard: Hard-Boiled Fantast." Knight points out similarities between Howard and the hard-boiled and "proletarian" writers of his day. Howard had far more in common with Jack London and Dashiell Hammett (for all he disliked detective fiction) than William Morris or Lord Dunsany, with whom he is frequently classed.

Even the appendices are substantial. One is a list of the books Howard is known to have owned. This backs up Knight's contention that Howard read little fantasy. Another appendix places Howard's suicide in the context of other romantic/literary suicides of the time. There were quite a lot of them. I've never seen the matter discussed like this before. We always hear about Howard and his mother. But there was more to it than that. Like many others, Howard wrote with conviction about blackness and despair, and finally carried out what he wrote.

This book is worthy of a World Fantasy Award in the Special Professional category. It is also worthy of a larger audience than the few libraries Greenwood seems to intend it for. There should be a paperback reprint, so it can reach thousands of fans for whom the thirty-dollar price tag will be too much.

THE CREATURE FEATURES MOVIE GUIDE
By John Stanley
Warner Bks, 1984, 304 pp, \$7.95

Poor John Stanley, who is a TV host, has had to endure thousands upon thousands of awful movies like *ASTRO ZOMBIES*. Fortunately, he has come through the experience sane or at least mad in the right way. His guide is witty and thorough. He generally shows good taste, praising the films that deserve it, dismissing the grade-Z flicks wittily (to merely say that *ROBOT MONSTER* is a bad film, after all, is redundant) and saving his vituperation for slasher films and such things as *THE EXORCIST II*. The one place where I find we seriously part company is *JABBERWOCKY* which he finds great stuff. I found it so vile I felt like I needed my brain scrubbed out afterwards.

Lots of little pictures, as usual, both stills and drawings. The cover painting, by James Warhola, is charming. I saw the original at the World Fantasy Convention and noted that quite a few clever details had been obliterated by titles and blurbs.



NOT NECESSARILY REVIEWS

I READ BOOKS AND THEN DON'T REVIEW THEM, SOMETIMES, UNTIL MONTHS LATER. A SAD, SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRS.

SO THIS COLUMN IS THE RESIDUE AND DETRITUS OF MY THOUGHTS ON THE BOOKS IN QUESTION. NOT NECESSARILY REVIEWS.

STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND

By Samuel R. Delany
Bantam (hardcover) \$16.95

This is Delany's first novel in 9 years, and he is badly served by Bantam here. The publisher is pleased to call this volume the first in a diptych of novels. What that means is that Delany wrote a monster novel which the publisher could not sell publishing in one volume ("My God, it'll run 700 pages! We'd have to price it over \$25! Nobody would buy it!"), and so, probably with Delany's grumpy agreement, they decided to cut the mother in half and present the unwary Delany-lover with an expensive problem---buy the first "novel" and realize to late the dirty trick pulled, and be forced to buy the second half "novel", later, in order to see how the story came out...or go sourly without while harboring evil thoughts about Bantam and/or Delany.

The second half of this incomplete novel is titled THE SPLENDOR AND MISERY OF BODIES, OF CITIES.

This first half begins marvelously with the story of Rat Korga, a man---apparently a homosexual---who is given a voluntary Radical Anxiety Termination operation (a kind of lobotomy) which makes of him a slave.

And in his society of radical heterosexuality, on his home planet, that is a reasonable choice.

Switch away from Rat Korga when his planet is wiped clean by nuclear fire by (apparently) an alien race inscrutable and at war (more or less) with mankind in this part of the galaxy. Korga survives by freak of location and alertness of a rescue party.

Switch to rich man Marq Dyeth, an industrial diplomat, part of an interwoven alien/mankind family of enormous wealth and power on a far planet. These are good aliens.

But this family is also involved in the complicated, Byzantine conspiracies and power plays required to compete for the ruling of the man-controlled thousands of colonized planets of the galaxy.

Key factor: Marq Dyeth is also a homosexual, and Rat Korga is his absolute perfect sex partner.

Rat Korga is brought to Dyeth's planet as a celebrity, the only known survivor of the mysterious fire-death planet, and they meet, and the bulk of the "novel" is spent detailing Dyeth's life and times and culture on his home planet, and in simply having Rat Korga and he spend enough time together to fall in love.

Kind of a bore, if you're not gay. Though the arcane and exotic culture is interesting, and the alien/human family is also intriguing.

The first volume of this specious diptych ends as a rival power group sends Rat Korga away and begins a coup of sorts to take over the galactic government.

A cliff-hanger.

A cheat!

But aside from that, a few thoughts on this and some other recent sf: we are entering an era of incredibly intricate and complicated, multi-level science fiction novels which take years to write and are too much for the casual reader to comprehend. We are seeing sf so well done it is accessible only to high-intellect people who have a taste for it. To really understand this stuff you have to know sociology, psychology, anthropology... Etc. Etc.

I admire the effort and above all the writing skills required to get all this amazing and detailed alien culture/future culture into a work of fiction without resorting to endless lectures and asides, but the goal of creating and presenting future civilizations in as believable manner as possible is self-defeating---it can be done but it requires a high-IQ audience willing to read it.

And that means an elitist sf and an elitist readership. A very narrow audience.

But okay, okay, let them as wants write this labyrinthian sf, and them as wants read it. But I wonder if there's any money in it for a publisher.

TRAVELER #1: TO KILL A SHADOW
By D.B. DRUMM
Dell, \$2.25

Drumm is a pseudonym for a fairly well-known sf writer, and a friend. And this new after-the-bomb survival series is fast-paced and low-credibility sf which will appeal to those who will believe genetic engineering can produce creatures from human DNA which are mostly organic machines on wheels which use animals and humans as fuel to make methane gases to keep their engines running.

The hero is a loner who is seeking revenge, and who has a kind of battle van he travels in. It uses regular gasoline, and that stuff is rare in this post-nuclear war United States.

Lotsa shooting, killing and little real sex; the priorities are emerging now: guns and killing and fighting are more important and more commercial than sex, now that porno is almost universally available and has lost its magic. Perhaps it comes down to boredom: there are a lot more ways to kill and maim, with a lot more different weapons, than there are ways to have sex.

I enjoyed TRAVELER, but I boggled at the magic science, and it would turn me off reading further novels in this series.

Understand, this is pure quill pulp writing, purple in all its glory. But with basic suspense and tension in place. Out-level fiction.

ETERNITY
By Mack Reynolds, with Dean Ing
Baen Books, \$2.95

This is an intriguing immortal-ity novel, obviously the first of a series. A group of immortals, or near-immortals, is in hiding in a small Mexican town when first a too-curious reporter invades, and then murders begin to happen---to the immortals.

Surprises, revelations, plot turns occur...and the identities of some of the immortals will star-tle you.

The conspiracy against the immortals is deadly and powerful, and their very survival is in question.

RICHARD E. GEIS



They (mostly) scatter from their long-time secret enclave as the novel ends, but their murderous pursuers are hot on their trail.

But the main question is: how well has Dean Ing finished this first-draft Reynolds ms.? [Remember that Mack Reynolds died leaving ten or more novels incomplete or unsold.] The answer is very well! This novel reads like a Reynolds novel, and has probably been enhanced by Ing's knowledge of weaponry and martial arts.

I would like to see this immortality series continued for a long while--probably beyond the supply of Reynolds' first drafts and/or plot notes.

FIRE PATTERN

By Bob Shaw
Victor Gollancz, \$14.95

Bob has used the rare phenomenon of spontaneous human combustion as the core of this novel.

And he begins the story with great skill and tension: a middle-aged man bursts into an incredibly intense self-consuming flame which reduced him to fine ash in a matter of a few moments, leaving only a small burned hole in the floor, a limited radius of heat damage--and two unconsumed hands.

A local reporter is assigned to the story. Ray Jerome is a science reporter and has severe emotional problems. His job is in jeopardy.

He is not prepared to accept the truth of spontaneous human combustion.

But as he investigates and checks on eye-witness accounts--and after he himself actually witnesses an s.h.c. event, a sickening, shattering experience, Ray is a believer. He discovers a common denominator in all the recent s.h.c. deaths--a box of pills given to each victim by a local doctor.

So far great.

But then Bob catapults the novel into an interplanetary intrigue, an invasion of human aliens from Mercury, adds the psi element of focused thought power causing the incidents (through history) of spontaneous human combustion, and interchanges minds from Mercury to Earth... In order to explain the phenomenon and bring in a hard sf aspect to the novel.

But to me the jarring mind-interchanges and alien invasion elements are too much, too incredible, and leave me feeling cheated. I wanted the story to stay on Earth with Ray Jerome and his emotional problems and the mystery of the spontaneous human combustion deaths.

I DON'T KNOW DEAR,
HOW DOES THE THIRD
WORLD FIT INTO MANICHEAN
DUALISM?



THE TIDES OF TIME

By John Brunner
Del Rey, \$2.95

A disappointing, confusing, experimental, seemingly pretentious novel.

A man and a woman are escaping an experimental scientific program in the future--they have a programmable, sentient boat which can create food to order but which is low on fuel--and they seek refuge on an island...

On the island they apparently shift through time to various periods of history, each time they live the same roles/lives on the island, and learn lessons from their encounters with the people and from various intruders.

The chapter headings are inscrutable, like:

UUMAAF

12

The Exhibit

is small and weak and ignorant and helpless...but alive. It's you, and me, and everyone as we once were

The Month

is any month

The Name

is its mother's, and your mother's, and mine too

So it goes. This is John's second attempt to strike out in a new direction recently, and I admire him for willing to take risks and try different story structures.

But I think the obscurity and repetitiveness of this story is a strike against it, even though, inexplicably, I found myself willing to read on and on out of curiosity and puzzlement.



FREE LIVE FREE

By Gene Wolfe
Mark V. Ziesing
P.O. Box 806,
Willimantic, CT 06226

Limited 750 copy edition, quality hardcover, dj illustration by Carl Lundgren, full-page interior illustrations by Rick DeMarco, individual chapter illustrations by Rich Schindler, bookplate by Joe Shea.

Each copy signed by all of the above, including, of course, Gene Wolfe. Which explains, partly the \$45. per-copy selling price.

Aside from being a collectors item, instantly, you want to know how good is this big, thick (496 page) novel, don't you?

It's excellent. This is the finest writing by Gene I've ever read. This novel grabbed me with humor, human interest, flawed, human, interesting characters, a mystery and a conflict of interests...and carried me onward to the very end with a feeling of not wanting the story to end. Gene could have written this to a million words, and I'd still be putting everything aside to read on and on, willingly, eagerly, entranced and delighted.

Well, yeah, it's a good read. It's about an old man named Benjamin Free who is struggling, with the help of a few free roomers in his condemned house, to prevent the city from demolishing it to make room for a freeway or something.

The mystery is that Ben Free is someone and something other than what he seems at first, and his roomers are united first in helping him battle the city and then, when he disappears after the city wins, in finding him and/or finding the hinted at treasure or key to riches or power or something he had said was hidden in the walls of his house.

The joy and delight of this novel, however, is primarily in the wonderful characterization of the fat, good-hearted hooker, the sometimes employed private investigator

who loves her, the failed, baffled toy salesman, the gypsy witch who may or may not have strange powers. And a host of secondary characters--cops, neighbors, salesman, hotel workers...

The novel is a pure delight. The only grunch I have is that the science fictional ending is confusing and seems to me out of synch with the previous 95% of the book. The ending jarred me. So sue me. Buy the book; it is really worth it!

AMAZING March, 1985, \$1.75
Edited by George Scithers, four-time Hugo award winner.

Reviewed by Richard E. Geis, thirteen-time Hugo award winner. Heh-heh.

Fine, vivid, detailed action cover by Larry Elmore who is the equal of Freas and Boris, and no mistake. The cover illustrates the lead fiction, "Hellflower," by Eluki bes Shahar, which I found too cluttered with futuristic slang to be worth the trouble to wade through. It had also a routine formula opening, which didn't promise anything.

You get me with the first few paragraphs, or you don't get me at all.

The other stories, a mish-mash of earnest fantasy, mostly, didn't tempt me to finish any of them. And I found the poems oughish.

I even object to Robert Silverberg's "Opinion" piece about how we're fools to feel nuclear power is a failed technology and too dangerous to let live.

He ignores the cost factor: all those nuclear power plants were built when all the projections showed the cost of oil and coal to be going out of sight, and before cost overruns went through the sky. Now the prices of oil and coal are falling below the cost of nuke power, and the nuclear plants are becoming uneconomic white elephants for the sucker utilities who own them.

And no one mentions the astronomical costs of decommissioning nuclear power plants.

So more and more nuclear power plants will be shut down and written off in the next twenty years. Until a really cheap new nuclear power supply system is developed, that avenue of power supply is doomed. OPEC is breaking up and oil will be so cheap (and natural gas and hydro power will have to compete!) that nuke power will be priced out of existence.

I liked the book reviews, but the letter column is too full of those cute, funny Carol Deppe letters.

INTERZONE #9, \$2.50
Edited by John Clute, Alan Dorey, Colin Greenland, Simon Ounsley and David Pringle.
An English prozine. USA subscriptions are \$10 seaml, \$13 airmail from Scott Bradfield, 145 East 18th Street, #5, Costa Mesa, CA 92627.

The lineup for this issue persuaded me to read the stories...or at least read them until I was bored or turned off.

J.G. Ballard's "The Object of the Attack" grabbed and wouldn't let me go. Assassinations/assassins always do. And Ballard writes well. Very well.

But Brain Aldiss' "The Gods in Flight" put me to sleep; he does what he wants with his fiction, I just cannot understand what it is, and when I can I usually find it isn't worth the trouble. But maybe this allegorical fantasy is beyond my appreciation. Yes, that must be it; he's writing over my head.

Thomas Disch's "Canned Goods" seems a good story that could have sold to an American prozine; rather obvious cynical little story of a desperate time in the future when formerly priceless pieces of art sell for a few cans of food. The cute ending has the buyer paying a can of soup for Andy Warhol's can-of-soup painting. Was it by Warhol? Whoever.

"The Luck in the Head" by M. John Harrison, is a Viriconium story, we are told, which means very little to me, since I can't figure this one out--ambiguous and esoteric and metaphorical as it is and must be, very colorful and sensuous and significant.

I'm being nasty.

Gary Kilworth's "Spiral Winds," on the other hand, is hypnotic and entrancing and puzzling at the end as time and identity do loop-the-loops. I may not ever forget this haunting story of a very strange kind of happiness.

"The Outer Zone" is reviews, very good ones.

And the letter column is biting and intelligent, very good.

The cover merits a note: a b/w collage showing an opened human skull and brain hanging over a trading circle of men in a brick courtyard.



OWL TIME
By M.A. Foster
Daw, \$2.95, 1985.

Daw is changing, I suspect. In the past we would never have seen a four-story collection of "literary" influenced and aped fictions which the author is pleased to call 'short novels'. [Actually there are two short stories, a short novelette, and a real short novel.]

Of the contents, "The Man Who Loved Owls," is 'intended to suggest J.G. Ballard.' It didn't to me. I thought it murky and dumb.

"Leanne" is intended to be written in the manner of Ray Bradbury ---or Harlan Ellison. Take your pick. None of the above. Foster hasn't the talent. This short story about a boy and his father (I think it was his father; this story remained with me for two hours at most) who are seduced/taken into another, alternate Earth by way of increasingly realistic dream trips, until they are finally unwilling or unable to return to our world. A stunning new idea, right?

I'm reading the third story, "The Conversation," now, and it is about a writer who is writing a story about a character who is taking on a life of her own. It's interesting, and I'm curious to see how it comes out, but Foster is never concerned with pace and dallies too long here, and there, inserting detail and ruminations which cause me to skip and skim in boredom. Foster writes a "literary" slow, meandering fiction here, and he/she is not enough of a stylist or talented enough to make this stuff inherently interesting.

This Publication...



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DRAGONROUGE—An Adult Fantasy
By Lin Carter
DAW, \$2.50, Dec. 1984.

How adult is it? It's so adult there isn't any sex, no violence, no tension, no nothing except a couple of knights with no visible intelligence accompanied most of the time by their ladies—one 'unclothed' and one amply endowed.

Nothing is made of this nude Scythian princess—Kerick is not apparently interested in sex, and no one seems to note her lack of clothing.

Kerick's sidekick is a Tartar knight named Mandricardo who speaks a blithering-idiot British-accented dialog.

They have incredible adventures which no one in his right mind could believe, in a magic-infested world called Terra Magica.

There's no real danger at any time to any of them, and after several tepid "wondrous" adventures they return home placid and happy as clams.

Since 'An Adult Fantasy' is in embossed red letters directly below the embossed red letters of the title I'm inclined to label this novel an adventure in misrepresentation. 'A Comic Fantasy' would have been more appropriate. There are some chuckles in the book.

I am beginning to think DAW is in the process of losing its readership with books like DRAGONROUGE and OWL TIME. The line was built on good, fast-paced action-adventure science fiction and fantasy. It could be depended on to provide that to its readership. If that readership discovers that a large percentage of its novels are not to be trusted to deliver the expected product, DAW will be in trouble.

THE KING OF SATAN'S EYES

By Geoffrey Marsh
Doubleday, \$11.95, 1984.

This is a Lincoln Blackthorne adventure. It begins intriguingly as a tailor in a small New Jersey town is revealed to be a highly-competent agent-of-fortune and his local friends undercover helpers.

His task this time: find and bring back a jeweled talisman of high occult power.

There are deadly rivals and opponents...

One is reminded of Indiana Jones.

And I didn't finish this competently-written adventure novel. I got one third through... Perhaps it was just a bit too non-serious, a touch tongue-in-cheek.

I lost interest and went on to other books.

Letters I Never Answered

By Damon Knight

Damon:

You're the only old-time science fiction writer I've never read. Why? It's your rep that turns me off. You're known as a hack who writes strictly for money, without pride, without feeling. We know what you have against other people's writing. What have you got against putting a little quality into your own??

Yours truly,
Marty Liss

Dear Mr. Knight,

Do you use an outline? I had a teacher in the 11th grade who told me that in order to be a successful writer I would have to use outlines. Well, I didn't agree with that! Many people I have written to that are tops in their field have never used outlines! I think that the only thing that matters is what works best for THE WRITER. (In this case, hopefully, me.)

I look forward to hearing from you. It's always special to "know" an Oregon! author.

Sincerely,
Jim Greaves

TEN YEARS AGO IN SF — WINTER, 1974

BY ROBERT SABELLA

The science fiction world took a collective sigh of relief when Roger Elwood announced he would no longer edit original science fiction anthologies. For the previous few years he had edited dozens of anthologies, saturating the market with so much average-to-mediocre science fiction that he spearheaded the decline of the original anthology market.

Avon Books announced it would no longer publish NEW WORLDS. This was the latest stop for a title that had seen its share of troubles. It was an important science fiction magazine in the Sixties but almost folded a few years later before being picked up by Avon Books as an original anthology.

Richard E. Geis changed the title of his popular fanzine from THE ALIEN CRITIC to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW under threat of a lawsuit by THE CRITIC whose publishers claimed they had exclusive rights to the title and who had the resources to back their claim in court. This was the sixth title change for Geis in his twenty-one-year career as a faneditor. His titles evolved from PSYCHOTIC to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW back to PSYCHOTIC then to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW then to RICHARD E. GEIS TO THE ALIEN CRITIC to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW.

Deaths in the science fiction field included writer Miriam Allen de Ford, editor Hans Stefan Santesson and editor/publisher Joseph Fernan.

Dear Damon Knight;

I am writing an article about success and am asking a few well-known writers if they will answer a few questions for me. If you have the time and don't mind participating, here are the questions;

1. What is your definition of success?
2. Are you a success?
3. If not, what would it take for you to achieve success?
4. What do you think is the biggest misconception about success and achieving it?

Thank you very much. I know that you are a very busy man. I look forward to your reply.

Again, thank you.

Truly,
Christina Kiplinger

P.S. If you do not wish to participate in this, please disregard this letter..

Dear Mr. Knight:

I beg you Mr. Knight, to please consider these two pamphlets. I am afraid to write anything else, (although I have much on my heart), for fear I might inadvertently harden your attitude towards God's precious truths.

In Christ's Service,
Jack A. Jennings

SMALL PRESS NOTES

THE WORLD HAS COME TO AN END,,OR
I HAVE DIED AND GONE TO HEAVEN,
HOW ELSE TO EXPLAIN THE COVER ON
HOLIER THAN THOU #20?

I MEAN, PEOPLE USED TO BE
THROWN IN JAIL FOR THE REST OF
THEIR UNNATURAL LIVES FOR LESS
THAN THIS.

I ALMOST WAS.
IS THERE NO JUSTICE?
ALAS, THERE ARE NO SUBSCRIP-
TIONS AVAILABLE TO HOLIER THAN
THOU, SINCE MARTY AND ROBBY CANTOR
PUBLISH HIT AS A PURE-BRED SIMON
PURE FANZINE AND DON'T WANT THE
BOOKKEEPING, SO DON'T TRY.

BUT YOU COULD ASK,
THEIR ADDRESS?
DON'T ASK,
NEVERTHELESS, ALL HAIL TO BRAD
FOSTER FOR ARTISTING THE COVER,
"FIRST CONTACT WITH AN ALIEN RACE-
2842" AND THE CANTORS FOR PUBLISH-
ING IT.

COMMENT: BUT BRAD, HOW COME
THEIR TENDRILS WEREN'T USED SEXUAL-
LY? EVERYTHING ELSE WAS.

CHRIS DRUMM, PUBLISHING MIDGET, HAS
STRUCK AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN.

What we have here is:
TIGER! TIGER! by James Gunn
Chris Drumm, POB 445, Polk City, IA
50226.

Chris has resorted to hyper-
bole in publishing this novelette
as 'a short novel.' What is it,
20-25,000 words long? The length
for a short novel is 40,000 words,
minimum. Don't be fooled. And
Gunn wrote and sold this novelette
in 1952. He writes an interesting
introduction about his life and sf
times in that era and the story's
editorial and publishing history.

The 'short novel' comes in
two editions: one regular at \$2.25
postage paid, and one signed and
numbered, limited 126-copy edition
with a heavy cream cover. [Easy on
the sugar!]

AND: THE MAN WHO MADE MODELS and
Other Stories

By R.A. Laferty
Also a numbered and signed
edition at \$6.00. Regular at
\$2.50.

Odd note here: three of the
five stories in this collection are
reprinted from previous titles.
This will drive bibliographers
CRAZY!

If you like Lafferty's weird,
off-the-wall, idiosyncratic fiction,
you'll like these, of course.

The man does not think in our
alternate Earth! His mind lives
in #579...or maybe even in #15773.
How else to explain...

By the way, Chris, I still
don't like your small 4 1/2 x 7 book-
let format, and I never will!

CONCORDANCE TO CORDWAINER SMITH

By Anthony R. Lewis
New England SF Association,
POB 6, MIT Branch,
Cambridge, MA 02139

Lewis has attempted to bring
together all the people, places,
things, concepts in the science
fiction works of Cordwainer Smith,
together with 'exegetical' comments
(some highly speculative).

[Never, ever read anything
written by a man who will use a
word like 'exegetical'! He should
roast in hell. What's matter with
'explanation & interpretation'?

By the way, I seem to have
lost/misplaced anything giving the

price for this letter-size, 90-
page stapled volume. Write to
the above address if interested.
[Damn few, I bet!]

SCIFANT-the magazine of amateur
sciencefiction/fantasy and art
To be published by Paul Doerr,
225 E. Utah, Fairfield, CA 94533.

Paul Doerr currently publish-
es LIVING FREE--A Personal Journal
of Self Liberation. \$1.25.

If you're interested in con-
tributing to SCIFANT, write Paul
for his two-page what's-it-all-
about.

BATTLEFIELD EARTH 1985 SCIENCE
FICTION CALENDAR

TWELVE SCENES BY SCIENCE FICTION
ARTISTS - INCLUDING THE BIRTHDATES
OF FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION PERSON-
ALITIES \$6.95

The artists who contributed
to this glossy, heavy stock, full-
color calendar are: Charles Wild-
bank, John N. Stewart, Gerry Grace,
Corey Wolf, Josh Kirby, Paul
Stinson, and Joe Spencer.

Naturally, I looked to July
19...no Richard Geis in the blank
date! How bitter the wormwood
taste of not being a famous science
fiction personality.

THE FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS
IN 'IDIOTS ABROAD', PART I
Freak Bros. #8, By Gilbert Shelton
and Paul Mavrides. \$2.

Rip Off Press, POB 14158,
San Francisco, CA 94114.

In full color this time. More
comedies of errors as the Freaks
head for South America and get sepa-
rated and sidetracked, to say the
least. The malicious satire is
as good as ever, and the dionysian
philosophy: "Anything for dope!"
is as pervasive as ever. What else
is there to live for---waiting for
Reagan to voluntarily cut the de-
fense budget?



RICHARD E. GEIS

NIVEN'S LAWS

By Larry Niven

Published for The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society by the Owlswick Press, Box 8243, Philadelphia, PA 19101-8243.

No price information; Larry sent me this copy as an autographed gift. Write to Owlswick, I guess, if interested.

This is a pleasant hardbound book containing 10 of Larry's Draco Tavern stories, and 10 Laws and Essays--an interesting mixed bag of Observations, Speeches, Convention Notes, Wisdoms.

And there is an intriguing Introduction by Jerryournelle.

FANTASY REVIEW #74 \$2.75

Edited by Robert A. Collins

Published monthly by Florida Atlantic University, 500 NW 20th St., Boca Raton, FL 33431.

Interesting editorial in which Collins, enraged at Reagan's reelection, froths at what he considers the electorate's selfishness, since it signifies to him that the Reagan policies will continue. He identifies those policies as:

1. Screw the poor
2. Screw the blacks
3. Screw the elderly
4. Screw the next generation
5. Screw the feminists

Robert Collins is a Liberal, of course, who perhaps fears that the money which subsidizes his FANTASY REVIEW will also suffer from government budget cuts to the education establishment. Outrageous!

Ah, we must all suffer, and even the welfare press must take a hit, soon. How terrible to have to "make it" on what FANTASY REVIEW earns in the marketplace, in competition with non-subsidized magazines. How frightful the prospect of doing without tax dollars.

Interesting also is the Harlan Ellison interview by Debra L. McBride who quotes Harlan as saying the reason he hasn't completed his long-awaited, long contracted-for novel, BLOOD'S A ROVER, is: "I haven't finished it because I enjoy writing it, and I figure I'll just keep it to myself for a while. Someday I'll finish it and let them publish it."

The revelations continue in S. P. Somtow's column, "A Certain Slant of I" in which he dazzles us with his ego and stuns us with his recounting of U.S. Immigration bureaucratic razzle-dazzle. Just as it is impossible to do anything substantive in the bureaucracy without a lawyer (as it is impossible to get Social Security disability without a lawyer) it does not occur to him that the bureaucrats and the lawyers have "an agreement."

Also lots of publication notes and reviews. Take away three full-page ads and you are left with 32 pages. Not too much for \$2.75.

THEY AREN'T REAL
LETTERS AND FANZINES,
OF COURSE.



NOT MUCH SPACE LEFT, I SENSE, SO BRIEFLY MENTIONED--MAYBE TO BE REVIEWED NEXT ISSUE--ARE:

Two Triskell Press limited edition chapbooks: THE CALENDAR OF THE TREES by Charles De Lint and Donna Gordon (poems with illustrations) \$3.95; and THE WHITEHORSE WOOD And Other Magicks by Jane Yolen (stories and poems) with interior artwork by Donna Gordon, \$3.95.

A HISTORY OF THE HUGO, NEBULA AND INTERNATIONAL FANTASY AWARDS

By Donald Franson and Howard DeVore From Howard DeVore, 4705 Weddel St., Dearborn, MI 48125.

\$6.00 postpaid.

The history, rules, and complete listings for the major awards in the science fiction field, 1951-1984.

A reference book every serious sf fan should have. This is like exhaustive and detailed!

THE HOUSE OF CTHULHU and other tales of the primal land By Brian Lumley Published and edited by B. Payl Ganley, POB 149, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226

Eleven stories, including two "Tarra Khash" novelets, illustrated by Jim Pitts.

Two editions: the softcover, with handsome orange cover (with Pitt drawing) is perfect-bound and costs \$7.50. The hardcover edition is \$20.

Add \$1. for postage and handling for either book.

These are horror/fantasy tales set on Earth at least 20 million years ago, in primal Theem'hdra, an hitherto unknown, unguessed Age of Man....

GUERRILLA CAPITALISM By Adam Cash Locomanics Unlimited, POB 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

This new release from Locomanics contains 28 chapters on how to join the underground economy in whole or in part. Valuable tips, cautions, and beware. Many references for reading in this area.

\$12.95 plus \$2. shipping and handling.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED

AF and even fantasy---at least reading enough of the books to have an opinion of sorts, unfair as it may be when I cannot finish some of them --has its rewards and creates renewed zest to say something about them (I've given up trying to be fair-minded, beyond a certain point) ...

Speaking of making SFR a battleground--more of a battleground---I just received page proofs of WRITERS OF THE FUTURE, a presentation of L. RON HUBBARD, edited by Algis Budrys, no less.

New writing talent in this 350+ page book, and further contests are planned. There is a page devoted to Contest Rules.

This first anthology will be published in February, 1985.

Judges of the fiction accepted for this volume were Robert Silverberg, Theodore Sturgeon, Jack Williamson and Roger Zelazny.

So I'll be reviewing this book, and judging the fiction, too, (and judging the judges, come to think) with no holds barred. Fang and claw, red blood sluicing into the gutters!

That's what SFR should be about. As one correspondent noted recently, SFR has become too tame.

SO WHERE WILL GO MY MOVIE/TV REVIEWS, MY SOCIAL/CULTURAL NOTES ON SEX AND SADISM? MY COUNTER-CULTURE THOUGHTS ON LIFE-STYLES AND MONEY MATTERS?

I can't wait two years!

I'll give up watching PM MAGAZINE (great sacrifice---I watch it mostly out of sloth, content to kill time till a movie comes on at eight or nine...) and high myself to the typer for the thoughts brought on in the above areas...in fact, all areas not sf and fantasy writing oriented.

I'm talking personal journal, folks. I'm talking RICHARD E. GEIS again.

But I'm not going to publish this pj on a regular schedule. Not with all this other work on the pot. RICHARD E. GEIS will be irregular. It will appear whenever 8 pages are filled, will be mailed in a #10 envelope, first class, and will cost \$1.00 per issue. \$US1.60 overseas.

I'm going to bring down from the attic storage room my old Olympia with the 18-characters-per-inch type, and will use that to get about 1200 words per page. Approximately 8000 words per issue with headings. REG will probably be mimeographed.

And you can subscribe to as many ahead as you like (though I'd advise a ten dollar limit).

I enclose a return envelope and subscription form with this issue of SFR.

May Ghod have mercy on my soul, and yours.

RAISING HACKLES

BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

1984: THE SCIENCE FICTION YEAR:

If ever there was a date that conjured up not only visions of science fiction but a genuine sense of the future, then 1984 was it. Now, 1984 is over. It seemed much like 1983 and 1982. No Big Brother appeared. Reagan received more popular and electoral votes than any other presidential candidate in history, but the Democrats still controlled the House and moved closer to taking control of the Senate. So in the United States, at least on the surface, things are pretty much as they have been since OPEC made gasoline expensive and ushered in the 55-MPH speed limit in 1973. (We've suffered several recessions since then and several Presidents, nothing earth-shaking apparently.) For a large portion of the rest of the world 1984 was spent under Big Brother, whether it was the out-and-out totalitarianism of the USSR, China and their vassal states, the petty dictatorships of many "Third World" countries, the religious persecution of many countries in the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent, or the smothering, babysitter-socialism of Sweden and many "enlightened" Western European countries. But not in good old America, the land of the free and the home of the brave ... maybe not. But, then again, maybe so. Let's take a closer look, and for those of you getting impatient, yes, I'll show how this affects Science Fiction in a most perfidious and profound way. (There, I accomplished one New Year's resolution: Sneak "perfidious" at least once into each column in SFR in 1985.)

In 1984 it became clearer than ever that the country was becoming more conservative than ever before. While on the surface the status quo was maintained, in the grass roots political trenches and among the young voter where it really counts,

the United States was seeing the beginning of a revolution which might change the face of this country radically. It will affect not only what you hear on political campaigns, but what books you read, what movies you see, how you behave (especially if you're a minority -- or a pregnant woman), and finally whether you live in a world of peace or die in a nuclear holocaust.

By the end of 1984 the forces of intolerance and hatred were raging in America. Neo-Nazis were battling it out with the FBI in a Portland motel and on an island in Washington state's Puget Sound, while in Salem the leader of another Nazi splinter group was recruiting members openly, even going so far as to put up posters in a record store that caters to punk rockers. Abortion and Planned Parenthood offices and clinics were being bombed in increasing frequency all across America. And the perpetrators of fascism and terrorism are not a bunch of disgruntled old folks: The ages of the Nazis arrested for armored car robberies and shootouts with the FBI were between the ages of 22 and 36; those arrested for a series of abortion clinic bombings in the Pensacola, Florida area were between 18 and 21.

The intolerance doesn't stop there, it goes on into the troubling, dark and ever-present area of censorship. And this time the ban-everything-we-don't-like crazies are taking direct aim at the U.S. Constitution and the free speech clauses in various state constitutions. In Oregon a group called Citizens in Action for Decency has started a petition drive to put a measure before the voters on the next general election which would do away with the freedom of

speech clause in the Oregon Constitution. Their spokesperson, Peggy Ault, a woman who clips out the underwear ads in the newspaper before her family looks at it, said the intent of the group is to ban all pornographic materials "from PLAYBOY on down." She also says the group plans to ban theatrical movie releases, 90% of which she finds objectionable, and says one of her first targets would be INDIANA JONES and THE TEMPLE OF DOOM which she termed "vile" and "satanic." Folks, people like her would be laughable if they weren't so dangerous. Her group has already forced through an ordinance in Clackamas County, bordering Portland, which bans all adult bookstores and any printed material "deemed obscene and offensive." (All I can say is RBG had better stop running nudes on the cover of SFR.)

Finally, as I predicted in a column in SFR some time ago, they have taken straight aim at the field of Science Fiction and Fantasy. Once again in Oregon, that great "state of enlightenment," fantasy role-playing games and Dungeons and Dragons in particular have been attacked as "teaching witchcraft" and "despoiling the minds of young students." A group of extremist "Christian" fundamentalists has been going through rural public schools in Oregon and elsewhere in western states and Bible Belt region of the U.S., slamming all fantasy role-playing games. School officials have let them hold assemblies, which students are required to attend, where they delam against the evils of D&D and teach the youngsters to burn copies of the game "at every opportunity." They have condemned the entire field of Fantasy by name, telling students it is evil, and citing the fact that part of the field is also known by the term, Sword & Sorcery. (Presumab-

BUYING A
BOOK WITH
INTENT TO
READ, BUNNY?



NO, NO, OFFICER...
I WAS ONLY GOING
TO REVIEW IT!



ly Science Fiction hasn't been attacked yet because of the word science.) Now public school teachers and administrators are confiscating any D&D games found on school property and also any fantasy books. One public school in rural Utah reportedly held a huge bonfire in which school teachers and administrators burned all the D&D games and fantasy books that they had earlier confiscated from the students. And now they want to ban Oregon's free speech clause, which in part reads the Oregonians have the right to "speak, write, or print freely on any subject whatever."

Now, some of you out there are thinking that I'm being needlessly alarmist. In fact, when I first wrote about this issue in SFR, and suggested a legal defense fund and asked for letters of comment, most felt that the courts would never allow such a situation to exist, or that the ACLU could best handle the situation, and in any case such a defense fund would be counter-productive because it would stir up publicity and excite more people into acts of censorship than if we just kept quiet and "kept to our own business." Well, I decided not to go ahead because I did not have the time or finances to undertake such a project, but today the assault has begun so I am making plans to start such a fund -- and I'll tell you why: Because I came from a private school where my rights were abused and damned if I'm going to see what happened to me and is happening to those children in Utah right now continue to happen without a fight. Another reason is that the argument, "if we just keep quiet and keep to our own business, they'll leave us alone," is the very same argument that the Jews used when Hitler first took over in Nazi Germany.

Oh, yes, folks, there are people out there just waiting for an economic calamity like REG keeps predicting, to happen. Because if America ever goes through a major depression, given the current political climate, then it would be a very dangerous time indeed; it might very well send America down the rapid, racist, road to fascism.

How this affects whether we have peace or plunge headlong into the horrors of a nuclear war, consider the effect on geopolitical, bilateral superpower relations if America goes fascist. It could very well mean a nuclear war, so what happens on these matters affects everybody reading these words whether you live in the U.S. or not. In fact, there is already a group of extremist, radical right-wingers who mindlessly push

General Daniel K. Graham's High Frontier concept, not because it will make America safer (it might very well -- and more on Star Wars and SDI later in this column), but because according to one supporter, "it will make America invulnerable to a Russian counterstrike, so we can go ahead and bomb Russia to smithereens, just like it says we will in Revelation." (The preceding was stated to me by an otherwise sane-appearing, middle-aged, politically active housewife.)

So maybe 1984 didn't live up to its billing, but watch out for 1985. The White House is planning a "news service" funded by taxpayer money which major news organizations are condemning. Ted M. Natt, editor and publisher of the DAILY NEWS in Longview, Washington, and a former president of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association, said, "I'm appalled ... it's newpeak!" White House spokesman Larry Speakes, says that the service will give information out "unfiltered" by the news media.

Yes, all told, Orwell would understand 1985 all too well and his characters would feel quite at home. But the forces of darkness and ignorance haven't won yet, not as long as good people remain to keep up the fight: Eternal vigilance is the price of true freedom and liberty. Welcome to 1985, hereinafter known as 1 A.G.O. (after George Orwell).



MUSINGS AND OBSERVATIONS:

One quick note about the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) or Star Wars as the press keeps insisting on calling it. Frederick Pohl in SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE, (Oct 1984), attacked the SDI concept and bitterly savaged parts of the Aerospace community in his column "Pohlemic." In the December issue Jerry Pourmelle and Donald Kingsbury responded, defending

SDI and attacking Pohl. Pourmelle wrote, "I do wish he'd stop talking nonsense in SFC," and accused Pohl of taking "cheap shots at free enterprise in space." Donald Kingsbury commented, "I found myself apologetic by his lack of understanding of the Russian mind."

Well, it looks as if we have a good new controversy to enliven a few convention panels this year. As for where I stand on this issue -- and you know I stand somewhere; I mean I've got an opinion on any issue (some like censorship I take very seriously, others like secret SFWA handshakes) -- well, I think SDI deserves a lot more research which is really all that most SDI supporters are asking (with the exception of the few crazies I mentioned above).

A note to American authors: At the end of 1984 the U.S. withdrew from UNESCO, the international agency that oversees the international copyright convention. Check with your agents how this could affect your books. If any reader has information on how the U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO will affect foreign copyright law, I would be much obliged if you would send me a note.

The mother of Toby Rodriguez, a Hermiston, Oregon, Junior High School student, blames the TV show STAR TREK (probably the episode "Errand of Mercy") for giving the idea to her son and three other children to invade the Unatilla Army Munitions Depot. Toby Rodriguez lost a finger on his left hand and hearing in one ear when an explosive stolen from the base exploded. Ah, yes, to boldly go where no other stupid teenager has ever gone before.

Doubleday has just purchased another million-dollar ball player. Nelson Doubleday, owner of the New York Mets baseball team has just traded for Gary Carter, the millionaire catcher of the Montreal Expos. Carter joins George Foster, a one-and-a-half-million-dollar-a-year outfielder and several other highly salaried stars. I hope Mr. Doubleday does not drain his publishing company dry. Think how many books could be purchased and printed for the dollars paid to Foster and Carter. Of course, this pales compared to the two million Simon & Schuster ponied up for the first novel from the master of non-fiction purple prose and non-scientific overstatement Mr. Nuclear Winter himself Dr. Carl "billions and billions of hype" Sagan. I'll be surprised if the book from the media-hungry nuclear gadfly ever sees print -- if so, think of all the billions and billions of

wood pulp that will be sacrificed. Somebody call the Sierra Club.

Now we come to that island paradise, Sri Lanka, where Arthur C. Clarke has resided in colonial splendor the last few decades. Seems that the island is being ripped apart by terrorists act initiated by the Tamil separatist guerrillas. Clarke has been given many honors by the ruling Sri Lankan government. I hope this does not make him a target of the terrorists. In Sri Lanka the fountains of paradise are now spewing blood.

Has anybody noticed that in the chain bookstores, particularly Waldenbooks, more and more of the store is taken up by items that are not books: magazines, cassette tapes (some just classical music), children's toys and comic books. B. Dalton's will soon be stocking video tapes in certain select stores.

I would suspect that the reason is that those items turn a faster profit than books. In that case why don't the chains just switch over to these items and let the independent retailers who care about books and who stock nothing but books run the book trade, especially those owners who give new authors a decent push. The chains are crowding many good booksellers out of business. If they then start turning their stores into audio and video cassette outlets, it could deal a grievous blow to the publishing industry.

REVIEWS:

SURVIVAL

By Gordon R. Dickson.
Baen, 1984, 279 pp., \$2.75

This is a short-story collection loosely grouped around the motif of survival. Nobody writes thoughtful action stories better than Gordon R. Dickson. Of the twelve stories included ten come from the Fifties, one from 1965 and the other from 1970.

PAST TIMES

TOR, 288 pp., \$2.95, 1984

IALOGUE WITH DARKNESS

TOR, 320 pp., 1985, \$2.95
By Paul Anderson

Here are two more collections of stories by Paul Anderson, god-sends for Anderson fans who now have less musty old magazines to search for if they are to complete their Anderson collection. PAST TIMES also features a new essay enlarged from an article in a fan-

zine, titled "The Discovery of the Past" in which Anderson makes a plea for historical awareness and the values and the necessity of learning a correct historical perspective. Anderson is as usual very effective, evocative and efficient. His essays are as persuasive as his stories are powerful. I highly recommend both collections -- Anderson has never written a bad story in his life (at least none that has seen print) and that's an accomplishment considering the immense body of work he has produced over the years.

YOU HAVE THE
SO-CALLED "DAY
OF JUDGMENT," SO
STOP TRYING TO
STEAL "NUCLEAR
WAR" FROM US
SECULAR HUMANISTS!



ISAAC ASIMOV'S WONDERFUL WORLDS OF
SCIENCE FICTION: #5 SUPERMEN
Ed. by Isaac Asimov, Martin H.
Greenberg and Charles G. Waugh
Signet, 350 pp., \$3.50, 1984

If I was teaching a class in science fiction I would use these WONDERFUL WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION anthologies as the textbooks for the course. They provide a consistently reliable cross-section of fascinating and in some cases little-known stories on whatever theme the anthology concerns.

This volume, SUPERMEN, is an apt case. Included is "Resurrection" by A.E. van Vogt, also known as "The Monster," one of the purest tales of a superhuman being ever written in SF and it's a great example of classic stum and drang macho Campbellian mankind-whips-the-alien SF. It also includes Zelazny's "Angel, Dark Angel," a sixties SF tale with all the mythic power that early Zelazny could unleash, reminding me in its emotional tone and impact, of Norman Spinrad's "A Night on Elf Hill," also written in the late sixties. There are ten other superb stories including "Pseudopath" by Philip E. High, "When The Myths Went Home" by Robert Silverberg and "In The Bone" by Gordon R. Dickson. Good stuff.

LIMITS

By Larry Niven
Del Rey, 256 pp., 1985, \$2.95

A new collection by Larry Niven. It features five stories by Niven alone, three collaborative efforts, one each with Jerry Pournelle, Steven Barnes and Dian Girard and five short-stories set in the Draco Tavern universe.

Of these my favorites are the Draco Tavern tales. I find it a fascinating universe and the length is perfect for Niven to get his observations, or the punchline in, zap the reader, and get out. Fun stories. A good collection.

TROJAN ORBIT

By Mack Reynolds with Dean Ing
Baen, 374 pp., 1985, \$2.95

Dean Ing, in TROJAN ORBIT, accomplishes a smooth, seamless posthumous collaboration with Mack Reynolds. His approach does seem more hardhitting, less politically and economically naive than Reynolds', but I can't tell whether that's due to Ing or to the subject matter.

Although the basic concept, the mafia attempts to take over a space colony, is in some ways similar to that in Reynolds' earlier novel, SATELLITE CITY, the centerpiece concept is a great piece of economic chicanery that's highly believable. A nice easy going thought provoking book, a lot like most of Reynolds' and Ing too, for that matter. Recommended.

THE WORMS

By Al Sarrantonio
Doubleday, 179 pp., 1985, \$11.95

THE WORMS is a taut horror suspense/thriller with a chiller of a concept. A young couple travel back to the girl's home town, where despite its seemingly innocent front it harbors an ancient and terrible curse. Sarrantonio knows how to mix local color with a tense fast-paced narrative. I left the lights on all over the house when I read this book. Don't read before you go to bed, you'll have the most unpleasant nightmares.

TIMESCOOP

By John Brunner
DAW, 239 pp., 1969, \$2.50

TIMESCOOP is a smooth, deftly executed comic novel of time travel and what would happen if a would-be dictator from the future tried to enlist malcontents from the past

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #53 Interview with Algis Budrys; Essay by Avram Davidson; "The Glass Bushell" by Bob Shaw; "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale: The Phil Dick Problem: The Phil Dick Solution" by Barry Malzberg; "Advice To A Writer On The Choice Of A First Word-Processor" by Algis Budrys.



to help him conquer his world. The results are hilarious. Highly enjoyable.

TWO REPRINTS FROM BLUEJAY:

TRUE NAMES

By Vemur Vinge
160 pp., 1981, \$7.95

This novel should have won its shorter novella version when it first appeared in 1981 as one-half of a Dell Binary Star. One of the few truly revolutionary concepts and stories to come along in the last decade and a half. Destined to be a classic. Buy two, one for yourself and one for a friend.

THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT

By Barry N. Malzberg
198 pp., 1982, \$6.95

This trenchant personal history of the SF field deserved to win a Hugo as best non-fiction book of the year, but of course it didn't, it was too honest a look at the field. Malzberg spares nothing in this soul-searing gaze at the once and future genre that never was.

ENGINES OF THE NIGHT is a cry from the soul, a scream from the dream quarter, ignore at your own risk. This book tells truths that many would prefer unsaid. SF claims to be a genre filled with tales of mighty supermen in far distant galactic empires, when in truth it is written by broken-down men and women, a fair share of them drunks and most of the rest heading that way. How else to drown shattered dreams but to forget them in a bottle of booze.

Read THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT and marvel at the fact so many can write pseudoprofound pabulum for adolescents for so long without blowing up completely. Or perhaps it is in the nature of SF writers that most of them prefer to ignore Dylan Thomas and go gently into that good night.

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.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #51 Interview with David Kingsbury, "The Decline of Fiction" by Charles Platt, "Flashpoint: Middle" by Barry Malzberg, "The Glass Bushell" by Bob Shaw. Also: Damon Knight, John Brunner, Gregory Benford, Darrell Schweitzer, Gene DeWeese, Elton Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #49 features Piers Anthony, Charles Platt, John Brunner, Gene DeWeese, Orson Scott Card, Darrell Schweitzer....

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #48 "The Treasure of the Secret Cordwainer" By J.J. Pierce; "Raising Hackles" by Elton T. Elliott; "Once Over Lightly" by Gene DeWeese; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; letters from Platt, Foster, Busby, Bloch, Ellison...

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #47 Interviews with Janet Morris and Charles Platt; "Philip K. Dick--A Cowardly Memoir" by Peter Nicholls; "Off Ground, and Ocean, and Sky" by Ian Watson; "Once Over Lightly" by Gene DeWeese; "Alien Thoughts" by REG.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #46 Interview with... "How NOT To Write Science Fiction" by Richard Wilson; "Standing on the Edge" by Steven Gallagher; "The...ing Hackles" by Elton T. Elliott.

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.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #44 Interview with Anne McCaffrey; "How Things Work" by Norman Spinrad; "Fantasy and the Believing Reader" by Orson Scott Card; "Raising Hackles" by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #43 Interview with James White; "The Porno Novel Bizz" by Anonymous; "How To Be A Science Fiction Critic" by Orson Scott Card; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; "Once Over Lightly" by Gene DeWeese; SF News by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #35 Interviews with Fred Saberhagen and Don Wollheim; "The Way It Is" by Barry Malzberg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; "Coming Apart at the Themes" by Bob Shaw.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #36 Interview with Roger Zelazny; A Profile of Philip K. Dick by Charles Platt; "Outside the Whale" by Christopher Priest; "Science Fiction and Political Economy" by Mack Reynolds; Interview with Robert A. Heinlein; "You Got No Friends in This World" by Orson Scott Card.

\$1.75 PER COPY FROM #37 ONWARD

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #37 Interview with Robert Anton Wilson; "We're Coming Through the Window!" by Barry N. Malzberg; "Inside the Whale" by Jack Williamson, Jerry Pournelle, and Jack Chalker; "Unities in Digression" by Orson Scott Card.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #38 Interview with Jack Williamson; "The Engines of the Night" by Barry N. Malzberg; "A String of Days" by Gregory Benford; "The Alien Invasion" by Larry Niven; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; SF News by Elton Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #39 Interview with Gene Wolfe; "The Engines of the Night"--Part Two by Barry N. Malzberg; "The Nuke Standard" by Ian Watson; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; SF News by Elton Elliott.

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