

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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FEATURE SELECTION

STARSHIP TROOPERS, by Robert A. Heinlein. Signet, N.Y. D2381, 1963. 208 pp. 50¢

This is the second appearance in paperback of the story that won the Hugo as the best novel of 1959. It was serialized, greatly abridged, in Fantasy & Science Fiction (as "Starship Soldier") and was published in hardcover by Putnam, both in 1959.

Occasionally novels win Hugos solely because they are controversial. STARSHIP TROOPERS is controversial, but it is also one of the best novels ever written.

The basic plot is the story of a boy turning into a man by means of his service as a starship trooper in the Mobile Infantry. The Mobile Infantry seven hundred years from now resembles paratroopers of the present. Their purpose is to punish or raid without the total destruction that would accompany a Space Fleet bombardment. Also, in this war, the opponents are underground communal arthropods with an interstellar civilization of their own, and Terra's heaviest atomics won't reach the deepest burrows on their planets. So...someone has to go in after them, and the Mobile Infantry plays a key part in the job.

Probably the most controversial factor in this book is

the premise that everyone who would like to become a citizen so that he can vote or hold political office must earn that right by helping to defend his country. Service is voluntary only, and a position will be found for everyone who does volunteer, no matter if man or woman, and no matter if handicapped.

Deep philosophical concepts alone do not make a good novel. However, along with fast action, a strong plot, and character development, they may be woven by means of vivid, masterful writing into a tapestry of great richness of the type that comes along only very rarely. STARSHIP TROOPERS is such a book.

NOVEL - 1
—The Editor

TIME AND STARS, by Poul Anderson. Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1964. 249 pp. \$3.95

This is an excellent collection of stories from recent magazines; the oldest is from 1960. For me, the best story is "Epilogue," about Earth of the very far future when everything is robotic—including the "plants," small "animals," etc. (III). Other stories are "No Truce with Kings" (V), "The Critique of Impure Reason," about a robot who is an amateur literary critic (b), "Turning Point" (d), "Escape from Orbit" (d), and "Eve Times Four" (E). This is an exceptional collection and is highly recommended. —The Editor

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SFR STORY RATINGS

Story category	NOVELLAS	NOVELETS ...	SHORT STORIES
Length in words	(19-39,000) ...	(10-18,000) ..	(up to 9,000)
Worth buying magazine for .	I-IV	A-C	a-b
Worth reading	V-VI	D-E	c-d
Read at your own risk ...	VII-IX	F-H	e-g

NOVELS

(40,000+ words)

Worth buying	1-5
Marginal	6-7
Buy at your own risk .	8-10

The ratings designate how well we liked the story. We do not rate collections or anthologies. Two stories "worth reading" usually make an issue worth buying.

SWORDS AND SORCERY, ed. by L. Sprague de Camp. Pyramid, N.Y. R-950, 1963. 186 pp. 50¢

This anthology contains eight short stories by masters of fantasy from Lord Dunsany to Poul Anderson, an introduction to heroic fantasy by de Camp, a short biography of each author, and a full-page Finlay illustration for each story. I am not going to try to rate the stories in this anthology, but they are good ones. If you like heroic fantasy, by all means get the book; if you haven't tried it, do so—you're missing something; and if you don't like it, read this anyway—it may change your mind.

—The Editor

BEYOND THE BARRIER, by Damon Knight. Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1964. 188 pp. \$3.50

This appeared as "The Tree of Time" in the Dec 1963 and Jan 1964 issues of F&SF. Gordon Naismith is a physics professor with an unknown past. He is kidnapped by people from the future and is told that he must kill a Zug, whatever that may be. This new world is one in which all humanity lives in a city in space; Earth was supposedly burned off in an atomic war. After the discovery of who Naismith really is the novel ends satisfyingly, but most of the book is somewhat confusing. (6)

—Dean M. Sandin

12 GREAT CLASSICS OF SCIENCE FICTION, ed. by Groff Conklin. Gold Medal, Greenwich, Conn. d1366, 1963. 183 pp. 50¢

This is an anthology of 12 short stories and novelets with odd, if not bizarre, endings. The best story in the anthology is "The Cage," by A. Bertram Chandler, wherein a group of stranded people try to prove to their alien captors that they are intelligent beings (c). The rest of the selections were rated as follows: nine short stories, with five "d's," two "e's," one "f" and one "g;" and two novelets, both "F's." All in all, if you enjoy odd endings in science fiction, I believe that you will enjoy this anthology.

—Robert Merryman

THE GAME-PLAYERS OF TITAN, by Philip K. Dick. Ace, N.Y. F-251, 1963. 191 pp. 40¢

Pete Garden, a player of "The Game," is the prime suspect of a murder when he can't remember anything he had done that day. Matters are complicated when it is found that five others of The Game have similar lapses of memory.

Once through the first third of the book, the story becomes more interesting. While not completely unsuspected, the ending is startling, leaving the reader something to ponder over. (6)

—Lawrence Beckwith

SKYLARK OF VALERON, by Edward E. Smith, Ph.D. Pyramid, N.Y. F-948, 1963. 206 pp. 40¢

SKYLARK OF VALERON, a sequel to THE SKYLARK OF SPACE and SKYLARK THREE, first saw print in Astounding Stories (Aug 1934-Feb 1935), and was reprinted by Fantasy Press in 1949. Seaton and Crane keep up the pace of their previous adventures by: escaping into the fourth dimension from deadly thought-beings; aiding the people of Valeron, a planet in a far-away galaxy; and at last defeating their fellow-Earthman and arch-enemy Marc DuQuesne. Get this book (and its predecessors); they're loads of fun.

NOVEL - 4

—Dean M. Sandin

BEYOND THE STARS, by Ray Cummings. Ace, N.Y. F-248, 1963. 160 pp. 40¢

BEYOND THE STARS is a fantastic classic taking place in the not-too-distant future. Dr. Weatherby and four other characters travel through space by means of an antigravity ray until they reach the outer edge of the universe. After leaving the universe, the characters encounter a world whose inhabitants they can communicate with. They find a polygamous society, with its virgins rebelling against the government, and a "nameless horror." Much of the book is given over to fantasy and specious scientific logic.

NOVEL - 7

—Gene Rider

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THE SEARCH FOR ZEI, by L. Sprague de Camp
THE HAND OF ZEI, by L. Sprague de Camp. Ace, N.Y. F-249, 1963. 143 & 113 pp. 40¢

Because of the fantastic publishing history of this, I am going to treat it as a single novel. (Avalon, 1962 and 1963, respectively, and see the credits in the paperback.) Many of the same comments apply to this book as did to SWORDS AND SORCERY (page 2). The book is the second novel of the Krishna series, taking place about 2143. Krishna is a planet peopled by humanoid aliens; Earth will permit tourists and such as long as they don't try to raise the technological level of the natives. Although this is not the first of the series, it may be read first. This book is recommended to all who like adventure on alien planets combined with comedy, at which the author excels.

NOVEL - 4

—The Editor

ELECTRONICS, by Stanley L. Englebart. Pyramid, N.Y. WS-16, 1963. 172 pp. 75¢

This is an interesting book about electronics today. Since the entire subject could not be covered in one book anyway, the author merely limited himself to certain areas, mainly transistors and related devices. One thing which detracts from its quality, however, is the fact that a few of the technical words are not properly applied.

—Bill Pond

THE CHRONOSCOPE

No articles in this issue because of the superabundance of books, but we have an article by Andre Norton waiting for the next lull. Books reviewed in the next issue will include ANALOG II, FUTURE IMPERFECT, and THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE.

—The Editor

MAGAZINE REVIEWS by Dean M. Sandin

Serials are not rated until the review of the final installment.

1963's BEST SERIALS

To my mind, H. Beam Piper's "Space Viking" (Analog, Nov 1962-Feb 1963) was undoubtedly the best serial in 1963. Piper weaves together the vengeful search for an insane killer and the evolution of galactic culture—embodying the assumption that history repeats itself as successfully as Isaac Asimov used it in his Foundation Series. "Space Viking" well deserves its rating of "3" (excellent).

In second place I would put Clifford D. Simak's "Here Gather the Stars" (Galaxy, Jun & Aug 1963; WAY STATION in hardcover). "Here Gather the Stars" has a special measure of Simak's wonderful and almost undefinable mood—it's been called pastoral, sentimental, even semi-religious; but none of these terms quite fits. The hero mans a galactic way station in secret from other men in this "4" (very good) novel.

Science Fantasy, December, 1963.
112 pp. 3/- (42¢)

"Skeleton Crew," by Brian Aldiss is a fair novella, but is too long. Aldiss delineates a world of the future in which Europe and America have sunk to second-rate status and the African nations are the cultural and scientific leaders. The hero is the captain of an English ship that is wrecked on the coast of Africa. He subsequently becomes involved in African political intrigue. NOVELLA - VII

Galaxy, February, 1964. 194 pp.
50¢ (3/7)

Jack Vance's two part serial, "The Star King," concludes here. The story is essentially a mystery. The hero is trying to discover the identity of a Star King (who are not kings at all) so he can kill him to avenge relatives. NOVEL - 6

New Worlds, December, 1963. 128 pp. 3/- (42¢)

In its second of three parts, Colin Kapp's "The Dark Mind" continues to be quite good. Ivan Dalroi, in waging his intense, one-man battle against the ruthless super-business, Failway Terminal, discovers the "dark side" of his mind, that makes him nearly unkillable.

In R. A. Hargreaves' "The Tee Vee Man," a technician repairs a faulty satellite. SHORT STORY - d

Worlds of Tomorrow, February, 1964.
162 pp. 50¢ (3/7)

"Lord of the Uffts," by Murray Leinster, is very long, practically a novel. It concerns a colonized planet, Sord Three, which has not been visited for two hundred years. The people have "duplies"—matter duplicators. Link Denham is confronted with the problem of keeping the duplies from getting off the planet—and thus wrecking the galaxy's economy—and of preventing a strike and violence from the natives of the planet. NOVELLA - V

Robert F. Young's "Little Dog Gone" is a moving story of how a man, a failure as an actor on Earth, makes a comeback on other planets in the galaxy. NOVELET - D

Subscription rates: 10 issues for \$1.00, 22 issues for \$2.00, 45 issues for \$4.00. Advertisements are five cents per word, minimum remittance \$1.00. Back issues are ten cents per copy; all are available.

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