

1959 In Science Fiction

BY EDWARD WOOD

1958 WAS A bad year. 1959 was worse. It was difficult to obtain science-fiction magazines on the newsstands. If the magazines cannot be found, it is obvious they cannot be read. This additionally means that the destiny of the science-fiction magazines are no longer in their own hands but must depend upon the caprice of the local distributor.

THE PRICE, FORMAT, owner changes seen during 1959 should logically continue into 1960. On the American scene two magazines folded, two changed owners, two changed prices, one changed format. At the end of the year, only 9 titles were left. This is fewer than during any other year of the 50's.

AS THE DECADE of the 50's ends and for science-fiction it was a most unsatisfying decade, the outlook is black in the extreme. The enthusiasm, drive, freshness, force, courage, vigor, or what-ever-you-may-call it, is gone. In fact, the withering process has been so gradual that one hesitates to admit that science-fiction which was once thought to be the elite vanguard of a new literature is now but a hollow shell, popular only in debased, degenerate, if not to say diseased forms. As success feeds upon success, so failure feeds upon failure. The decade was where novel ideas and concepts lagged far behind the sty-

listic writing techniques imported from mainstream literature. There is a profound need for an analytical assessment of the magazine science-fiction of the 1950's.

THE 1959 MAGAZINES are listed in alphabetical order with the number of issues published during the year and also the total number of issues published by the title to the end of the year also included. Since there are so few American titles, three English and one Scottish titles are also reviewed. The regular non-reprint United Kingdom magazines contribute many stories to the American market and should be included in the yearly reviews. Their average quality is excellent.

1. AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, 12 issues, (349). There has been a remarkable improvement in the Ziff-Davis twins and stories like "The Stars are Calling Mr. Keats" by Robert F. Young (June) and "Sneak Previews" by Robert Bloch (Nov) and many others are excellent. For those who would like to see Dr. Kildare in a futuristic setting, try "Star Surgeon" by Alan E. Nourse (Dec.). Biggest disappointment of the year was Edward Elmer Smith's "The Galaxy Primes" (March-May). Doc has done so much better. The cover art is sloppy and detracts

FROM the magazine,

2. ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, 12 issues, (349). With the November issue the price was raised to 50¢. It 's about time. This was a trifle better year for Campbell than 1958 but I still rank it 2nd in a field of 11 American magazines. "Despoilers of the Golden Empire" by David Gordon (March) was merely Campbell's speech at the Solacon put down on paper. I'll pay for Campbell's stories and editorials - not his speeches. Readable and likeable if not outstanding were "Dorsai" by Gordon R. Dickson (May-July) and "The Pirates of Ersatz" by Murray Leinster (Feb-April). Best story of the year for ASF was "Cat And Mouse" by Ralph Williams (June). Is there really a need for stories about the American Civil War written from the viewpoint of the plantation slaves? Then why "The Destroyers" by Randall Garrett (Dec)? ANALOG SCIENCE FACT FICTION???? NO, NO, NO, NO.

3. FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, 12 issues, (62). With the September issue, the title was lengthened from Fantastic. As with its companion magazine Amazing, there has been a welcome improvement in story quality. Best buy of the year for any magazine was the all Fritz Leiber November issue. Also enjoyable were "Conquering Hero" by Marion Zimmer Bradley (October), "The Hungry Eye" by Robert Bloch (May) and others. There was an illfated attempt to convert Fantastic to a non-science-fiction magazine. Apparently some publishers and editors just won't learn from the past.

4. FANTASTIC UNIVERSE (SCIENCE FICTION), 8 issues, (66). Great American Publications purchased this magazine and with the October issue converted it from a bi-monthly digest to a monthly pulp at the same price. Good news indeed to fans is the fan review department operated by Belle C. Dietz. Editor Santesson is trying hard and for that he deserves credit. There is too much emphasis on non-science-fiction in the magazine but he does run a broad spectrum of story material which is a distinct asset to the field.

5. FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION, 6 issues, (46). There has been a serious decline in the Lowndes magazines during 1959 ranging from the use of 3 color covers to the use of reprints from his pre-war magazines. The T. N. Scortia articles on space travel and his "The Renegade" (April) were the most interesting items during the year besides the reprints. The Gluck and Asimov articles were entertaining but the level of fiction was unexciting.

6. GALAXY MAGAZINE, 6 issues, (104). H. L. Gold maintained his normal status during the year. I rank Galaxy number 3 in a field of 11 even though I have a sneaking hunch that Damon Knight's If had it continued, would have grabbed the #3 spot. One cannot help comparing the magazine today and its first two years and the comparison is singularly dismal. The added pages and the increased price tag haven't done much for the magazine. The blooper on the Oct & Dec titles and prices should provide some interesting details on sales.

7. IF SCIENCE FICTION, 4 issues, (53). The February issue was the last edition by Damon Knight. With the next (July) issue, H. L. Gold was editing this addition to Guinn's publishing business. The book-review section by Fredrik Pohl was excellent and much superior to the one contained in Galaxy. The stories read a bit like Galaxy rejects. Some of the more interesting stories were "Pipe Dream" by Fritz Leiber (Feb), "The Wind People" by M. Z. Bradley (Feb) and "Summer Guests" by James H. Schmitz (September).

8. THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, 12 issues, (103). Number one in a field of 11 but it was closer this year. "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes (April) was my favorite story of the year and was instrumental in my selecting Mill's magazine as best. Not to be missed is the impressive "The Alley Man" by Philip Jose Farmer (June). With the February issue the price was increased to 40¢ and the October anniversary issue was priced at 50¢. Why not go to 50¢ directly and stop these

ONCE AGAIN, a new year and a new-annual report on the science-fiction magazines of the past year by Ed Wood. Ed is one of the few readers of science-fiction that reads each and every story published in magazine form. This is his second annual report for us, having replaced Thomas S. Gardner who did them for many years. We, and we're sure our readers will also, greatly enjoy comparing Ed's opinions and comments with our own. This year we agree almost 90% with Ed's opinions.

Read this report and let's hear from you on how you agree or disagree with it. the editors.

Subterfuges? Charge what you need to survive. The bulk of fiction in MOBASP is always excellent but "Starship Soldier" by Robert A. Heinlein (Oct-Nov) was poor. If one wishes to glorify the military, do so honestly and not with phony threats. Personally I must disavow objectively in the matter having been drafted twice by neighbors and enemies.

9. NEBULA SCIENCE FICTION, 5 issues, (42) /Scottish-folded/. Edited by Peter Hamilton, this Scottish science-fiction magazine folded during the year with its 42nd issue. Some issues (30-39) were given U.S. Distribution. Many authors seen in U. S. magazines also wrote for it - Aldiss, Chandler, Temple, Silverberg, etc. Lots of good reading here and it will be missed.

10. NEW WORLDS SCIENCE FICTION, 11 issues, (89). Only 11 issues this year for this English magazine edited by John Carnell due to the six-weeks printing strike during the summer. Many of the serials published here have been reprinted in the U. S. especially in the Ace paperback series. At this time, Carnell edits 2 other magazines in addition to New Worlds, these being Science Fantasy and Science Fiction Adventures. The content in the main is that of simple stories simply told. Science-fiction readers who are strangers to these magazines are missing some excellent stories. Were I to rank the Eng-

lish magazines with the American I would place New Worlds in #3 position displacing Galaxy to #4. However since so many American readers do not read the foreign magazines I have arbitrarily limited the rating to magazines available to the average reader.

11. SATELLITE SCIENCE FICTION, 4 issues (18) /folded/. Another experiment, another failure. The large size Satellite was given the poorest distribution ever attained by a science-fiction magazine. Excluding a few localities, getting a copy was like a treasure hunt. How any magazine can possibly compete with others on basic intrinsic merit under these circumstances is difficult to understand. Satellite was not a perfect magazine, far from it, the use of reprints from Weird Tales was not clever, yet there was here an attempt to do something to survive. The articles by Sam Moskowitz were valuable contributions to science-fiction history and may possibly be continued in Fantastic Universe.

12. SCIENCE FANTASY, 6 issues, (38). Another of John Carnell's trio. Originally started by Walter A. Gillings in 1950, it has become a staunch member of the Nova team. Many stories having a fantasy aspect appear here. At present the magazine is reprinting Sam Moskowitz's articles from Satellite. Among the better stories were "Super City" by Richard Wilson in #33 which formerly appeared in Infinity Science Fiction (Jan-March 1958) and "Echo in The Skull" by John Brunner in #36 which has appeared as Ace #385.

13. SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES, 6 issues, (11). This Carnell magazine started off by reprinting the contents of the American magazine of the same name edited by Larry Shaw. With the demise of the parent magazine, it switched over to original English material with its 6th issue, January 1959. Here is probably the only magazine left that prints material akin to that of the old *This was written before the announcement that Fantastic is going to continue some of the series, while FU is also using some of the articles. -ed

Planet Stories. Try "Galactic Destiny" by E. C. Tubb (Oct) or "Shadow of the Sword" by Wynne Whiteford (Jan) and see what you think.

14. SCIENCE FICTION STORIES (The Original), 7 issues, (35). The remarks about Future Science Fiction apply equally to this Lowndes magazine. There were some good stories like "Project Starlight" by Kate Wilhelm (March), "Luck, Inc." by Jim Harmon (Nov) and others but "Caduceus Wild" by Ward Moore and Robert Bradford (Jan-May) was so tame that the only word to describe it is "dull"! The steps that Robert Lowndes has taken with this magazine and Future have been backwards. He formerly used his extensive knowledge of the science-fiction field, to bring out interesting facets about it. Today he has turned to semantics to tell us how much better his current poverty stricken covers are compared to his former ones which were so striking. If the situation is that bad, give up!

15. SUPER-SCIENCE FICTION, 5 issues, (18), /folded/. W. W. Scott announced that his magazine was losing money and would turn to monster to see if that could attract a new audience. It folded with its October issue. I did not feel that the introduction of monsters as a theme was necessarily offensive. It did print a fair grade of adventure material but it really was something out of the past. Nor was it helped by the lousy print job.

WHAT OF 1960?

THE APPEARANCE OF Tuck's A HANDBOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY plus the impending publication of THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES 1951-7 by Metcalf-Day; Cole's CHECKLIST OF ANTHOLOGIES; Archer's FFM INDEX, Cockcroft's WEIRD TALES INDEX etc. show that it is now a time of consolidation and re-examination so as to see where we have been.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

THERE IS A sizable unsatisfied science-fiction market. The problem is reaching that market. For magazines, it is no longer a question of format, price or even content. All the magazines could probably sell for 50¢ an issue and still sell about the same. The focal point is to reach the actual and potential reader. Unless the magazines can eliminate this distribution blockage, all other changes will be useless.

THE END

Acknowledgments: This report on the 1959 magazines could not have been completed without the assistance of Mr. P. Schyuller Miller of Pittsburgh and Mr. E. Kemp of Chicago who were kind enough to lend copies of the 1959 magazines which had eluded my own "treasure hunt".

GERMAN SCIENCE-FICTION NEWS

by Rainer Eisfeld

"UTOPIA-MAGAZIN" FOLDS

AUGSBURG, 15 December, (CNS) - Germany's first and -after the German edition of Galaxy Magazine had folded in May - last science-fiction magazine publishing short stories, Utopia-Magazin, ceased appearance in mid-July. Being bought out by the Pabel Publishers since December 1955, it had 26 issues published. Utopia-Magazin had featured covers by Nuetzell and Ensh and by Germany's leading s-f artists, H. J. Bruck and Karl Stephan, as well as excellent material story - and article-wise. Isaac Asimov, Poul Anderson, Robert A. Heinlein, A. E. van Vogt, Ray Bradbury, Eric Frank Russell, Murray Leinster and many other American top writers had appeared in its pages. It featured illustrations from start to end, and the first six or so issues included many photos and regular movie columns by Forrest J Ackerman. Short stories never sold in Germany, but this is a severe loss to the German sf field.

PAPERBACK AND HARDCOVER SURVEY

AUGSBURG, 15 December, (CNS) - The Ger-

man boom in paperback science-fiction which reached its peak during 1958, is strictly on the decline. After the "atr" series of the Lehning Publishers folded with its 13th issue, too, only five s-f paperback periodicals remain on the German market - two of them published by Pabel, two by Moewig, and one by Lehning. Three of these feature 80% reprints.

On the book side, the situation looks better. Zinnemann Publishers started a new lending library series under the title "Out of Time and Space". Ullstein brought out an anthology "Woman From Mars and other Science Fiction Stories" which included pieces by Bradbury Wyndham, McIntosh, Moore, St. Claire and Porgess. This was a pocket book. Goldmann Publishers, known for their excellent mysteries (Edgar Wallace, Agatha Christie and others) will publish science fiction-novels from January onward. The selection, done by Dr. Herbert W. Franke, will be an excellent one, with covers done in modern style. The first novels will be Asimov's "Currents of Space" and "Stars Like Dust", Bester's "Emblished Man" and Blish's "HISPER". These books will continue the famous "Rauch Tradition" of 1952, established by Karl Rauch Publishers with "Wing A" by Williamson (German title of "The Humanoids"), "I, Robot" by Asimov and "The Incredible Planet" by John W. Campbell, Jr. AWA Publishers continue to bring our science-fiction juveniles (e.g. Lester del Rey's "Marooned on Mars", Phil Latham's "Five Against Venus" etc.) Doerner Publishers, usually preferring German authors, published "People Minus X" by Ray Gallun and "The Mind Cage" by van Vogt recently.

ERNSTING DISMISSED BY MOEWIG PUBLISHERS

Walter Ernsting, former editor of the "Utopia" periodicals, who had left Pabel and gone to Moewig in 1958, was dismissed by the latter as with August 15th. Ernsting continues to write science-fiction novels under the pen-name of "Clark Darlton".

FIRST GERMAN HORROR FILM

AUGSBURG, 15 December, (CNS) - The first German horror movie was filmed by produ-

cer Wolfgang Hartwig under the title "Satan and the Naked One". Hartwig, who is famous for his sex movies, made this movie, in spite of rather good actors being represented, an utterly bad one. People, of course, went to see the "nude" and not Satan who was one of those mad scientists experimenting with bodies and heads a la Frankenstein. The film, shown during the last months, was quite a success, as might be expected.

TWO GERMAN S-F BOOK CATALOGS

AUGSBURG, 15 December, (CNS) - The s-f Book Service "Transgalaxis" and the SCIENCE FICTION CLUB EUROPA are both publishing a catalog of science-fiction in Germany. The "Transgalaxis" catalog came out in book form and included but authors and their novels listed alphabetically. The SPCE catalog is printed within the club's journal, "Blick in die Zukunft", and includes also short stories and an author's photo in each issue. It will be run for quite some time.

AUGSBURG, 15 December, (CNS) - Karl Herbert Scheer, winner of this year's "Hugo" for Germany with his novel, "Octavian III", was born June 19, 1928 near Frankfurt. In 1943, he wrote his first novel, "SOS From Star A". Since then, more than 70 novels - science-fiction and mysteries - have been published by Scheer. He is unmarried; his hobby is sharp-shooting. His only science-fiction pen-name: Alexej Turbojew, under which he wrote two excellent adult novels - "World Without End" and "Antares II". Scheer's best works besides the mentioned ones are "Oblivion", "Man From Oros", "Nothing Besides Ourselves", "Galaxy-Without Mankind", and "Pronto 1318". Scheer also writes a series of futuristic detective novels. Personally, Scheer is a good sport who likes a laugh, knows more jokes than all other German s-f authors together, and by night shoots at traffic sign posts when racing by in his car. As a writer, he represents the favorable merger of German technical-accuracy and convincing drzail with American adult science-fiction. His novels own tension, action, and a van Vogtian impact.

And that about finishes my reports from Germany for 1959. It is my hope that they gave you at least an outline of the happenings in Germany, as far as science fiction is concerned. My and the "Science Fiction Club Europe's" best wishes go to the readers and editors of Science Fiction Times for a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year. -Rainer Eisfeld

Science/Fantasy Articles In New Grolier Encyclopedia

NEW YORK, 4 January, (CNS) - Five articles on science-fiction and fantasy will be included in the new edition of the Grolier Encyclopedia, now in preparation. They will consist of definitions of each form, with examples; plus brief biographies of Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke and Robert A. Heinlein. Bradbury and Clarke were selected as the most popular of living s-f authors, and Heinlein as the most influential.

The encyclopedia is published by the Grolier Society, which also publishes the Encyclopedia Americana and The Book of Knowledge.

Author of the five essays is James Blish.

SCIENCE-FICTION BOOKS

by Stephen J. Takacs

POCKET-BOOKS RECENTLY RECEIVED:

THE FUN HOUSE by Benjamin Appel, Ballantine Books, NY, 35¢, Nov. 20, 1959.

WE CLAIM THESE STARS by Poul Anderson; plus: THE PLANET KILLER by Robert Silverberg, Ace Books, NY, 35¢, Nov. 28.

STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, No. 6 edited by Frederick Pohl, Ballantine Books, NY, 35¢, December 14, 1959.

THE ENEMY STARS by Poul Anderson, Berkeley Books, NY, 35¢, Dec. 22, 1959.

THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES by Harlan Ellison; plus: A TOUCH OF INFINITY by Harlan Ellison, Ace Books, NY, 35¢, December 30, 1959.

HARD COVER BOOKS RECENTLY RECEIVED:

THE SHUTTERED ROOM AND OTHER PLACES by H. P. Lovecraft and Divers Hands, Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin, \$5.00 November 16, 1959.

MENACE FROM EARTH by Robert A. Heinlein, Gnome Press, \$3.50, Nov. 24, 1959.

THE MARTIAN MISSILE by David Grinnell, Avalon Books, NY, \$2.95, Nov. 27.

THE EDGE OF THINGS by William E. Barrett, Doubleday & Co, \$3.95, December 23, 1959.

THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JONATHAN HOAG by Robert A. Heinlein, Gnome Press, \$3.50, December 30, 1959.

DON FORD WINS TAFF

HARROGATE, England, 5 January, (CNS) - Ron Bennett in his publication The Sky-rack announced today that Don Ford had won the TRANSATLANTIC FAN FUND for 1959.

Don Ford won by an overwhelming majority. The final figures were: Don Ford 499, Terry Carr 331, and Bjo Wells 288. Don will be sent to the 1960 London Convention as the American delegate of science-fiction fandom.

The TransAtlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) is a science-fiction fan organization set up to collect money and name a member of fandom (either from overseas or U.S.) to attend a convention on the other shore. In most cases enough is collected to completely pay for the fare, etc., over and back.

TAFF has two set-ups working together, one in the United States and one in England. This year Bob Madle was head man in the United States, while Ron Bennett was the head of the British end of the organization. In the final breakdown, the voting ran this way:

	FORD	CARR	WELLS
U. S.	399	235	198
ENGLAND	100	96	90
total	499	331	288

Next time around, it will be a British fan that will be sent to a U. S.

THE SCIENCE-FICTION RECORD

BY Frank R. Prieto, Jr.

SCIENCE/FANTASY MAGAZINES OUT IN THE U.S. DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 1959:

NAME	DATE	PRICE	SIZE	DATE ON STANDS	SCHEDULE	PAGES
Galaxy Magazine*	Feb.	50¢	Digest	Dec. 3, 1959	Bi-Monthly	194
Amazing S F Stories	Jan.	35¢	Digest	Dec. 3, 1959	Monthly	146
Fantastic Universe S F & F	Jan.	35¢	Pulp	Dec. 5, 1959	Monthly	128
Astounding Science Fiction**	Jan.	50¢	Digest	Dec. 5, 1959	Monthly	178
Fantastic S F Stories	Jan.	35¢	Digest	Dec. 10, 1959	Monthly	130
Fantasy & Science Fiction	Feb.	40¢	Digest	Dec. 31, 1959	Monthly	130

*title changed back to Galaxy Magazine from Galaxy Science Fiction.

**30th Anniversary issue and first issue with 178 pages; last to be called Astounding Science Fiction.

During December 6 science/fantasy magazines came out. 1 was pulp-size costing 35¢ and containing 128 pages. 5 were digest-size costing \$2.10 and containing 778 pages for a monthly total of \$2.45 and 906 pages.

NOT SCIENCE/FANTASY, BUT OF INTEREST:

Fate	Jan.	35¢	Digest	Dec. 1, 1959	Monthly	130
Science Digest	Jan.	35¢	Digest	Dec. 24, 1959	Monthly	96
Fate	Feb.	35¢	Digest	Dec. 28, 1959	Monthly	130

Convention.

Our sincere congratulations Don, the best man won.

SCIENCE-FICTION FORECASTS

Coming Up Next In The Pros

THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB

The selection for March 1960 is THE HAUNTED STARS by Edmond Hamilton. Publisher's Edition sold at \$2.95. Book Club members' Edition: \$1.00.

The selection for April 1960 is SCIENCE FICTION SHOWCASE edited by Mary Kornbluth. Twelve yarns by the leading authors of science-fiction. Publishers' Edition sold for \$3.95; club members' Edition: \$1.00.

FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION STORIES

Novelets: MERLIN by J. T. McIntosh, and THE BOTTICELLI HORROR by Lloyd Biggle, Jr
 Short Stories: STRANGE SHAPE IN THE STRONGHOLD by David R. Bunch, PURDY'S CIRCUS by Franklin Gregory, and WHEN HE AWAKENS by Steven S. Gray.

IT'S THE PITTCON IN 1960

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

by Our Readers

January 16, 1960

Dear Jimmy:

The "second December 1929 issue" is a complete delight! Please find a pretext for doing something similar soon again.

But there's a small flaw in 2d Dec 59:

I was a judge (for paperback mysteries & sf) in the recent Maggie Awards, so I can authoritatively state that the winner in sf paperbacks was (thank God!) not ON THE BEACH, but Jack Finney's THE THIRD LEVEL (Dell; original hardcover Rinehart 1957).

Best,

Tony (Boucher)

Very sound, if surprising, point that Sam makes about the relative desirability of sf book titles 30 years ago & today.

(Thank you very much for the kind words and correction, -James V. Taurasi)

IT'S THE PITTCON IN 1960

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