

"The World Of Tomorrow Today!"

Science Fiction Times

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Karloff Succumbs At 81

A Tribute By Forrest J Ackerman

HGWells. Hugo Gernsback & Frank R. Paul. Edgar Rice Burroughs. And now-- Boris Karloff. Time stops for another immortal of the science fiction field but his achievements live on.

When the first list of science fiction motion pictures--"scientifilms"--ever compiled was published (The Time Traveller Jan. 1932), FRANKENSTEIN was on the list. The film had just been released, Christmas 1931, and after 15 years of relative obscurity on screen, Boris Karloff was discovered at last. He had appeared in Kosmik Films' HOPE DIAMOND MYSTERY, a serial, in 1921; THE CAVE GIRL (not Burroughs) same year; THE BELLS, 1926, in the role of a Caligari-like mesmerist; TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION (Burroughs serial) in 1927; THE UNHOLY NIGHT with Lionel Barrymore in 1929; and the Mascot serial KING OF THE WILD in 1931. In fact he made 15 films in 1931, including a Svengali-like movie with John Barrymore, THE MAD GENIUS, but it was Mary Shelley's monster story that catapulted him to instant fame and made him a household word for nearly 40 years.

Frankenscience was his forte.

How happy we "stf" (s.f., sci-fi) fans were, starved for science fiction fare in the 30s, when the Karloff films came into vogue. Many were fantasy, of course; horror; such as the classic Imho-tep role of the 3700-year-dead-yet-living MUMMY; THE OLD DARK HOUSE; THE MASK OF FU MANCHU; THE GHOUL; THE BLACK CAT; THE RAVEN; but in 1935 the trend began to change toward "frankenscience" films--the beautiful BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN--with screen story after story in which he "meddled with things man was meant to leave alone" and "tampered in God's domain"--THE INVISIBLE RAY, THE MAN WHO LIVED AGAIN, THE WALKING DEAD, SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, MAN THEY COULDN'T HANG, THE APE, BEFORE I HANG, BLACK

FRIDAY, MAN WITH 9 LIVES...

He made about 150 films in all. THE DEVIL COMMANDS was adapted from William Sloane's well-known novel, The Edge of Running Water. After 3 appearances as the Frankenstein monster he abandoned the role of the creature but continued to play other parts in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and FRANKENSTEIN--1970 (made in 1968). He was outstanding in THE BODY SNATCHER for Robert Wise, of DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL fame. He played for Cecil B. deMille in UNCONQUERED, with Danny Kaye in THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY.

In the final 5 years of his life he was a busy man, "commuting" from his native England, continuing to make films in Hollywood. He showed great presence in THE RAVEN as Dr. Scarabus, 1963, the same year he went thru a marathon in 2 or 3 days and played all his scenes for a picture called THE TERROR; in 1964 he did COMEDY OF TERRORS and BLACK SABBATH; in 1965--DIE, MONSTER, DIE--adapted from Lovecraft's Colour Out of Space; followed by BLIND MAN'S BLUFF, made in Spain; THE SORCERERS; THE CRIMSON ALTAR with Christopher Lee; TARGETS (an exceptionally fine performance under the direction of Peter Bogdanovich); and 4 to-be-released productions on which, an oxygen tank by his wheelchair, he worked for 5 weeks in Hollywood late last year, THE ISLE OF THE SNAKE PEOPLE, THE FEAR CHAMBER, HOUSE OF EVIL and (not the Leinster work) THE INCREDIBLE INVASION. He was scheduled to do THE DARK in England at the time of his death and return to Karloffornia for 5 more films. His Jonathan Winter TV show last Halloween where, despite lacking half a lung, and crippled with arthritis (one leg in an iron brace), he put on a spirited performance, his last as an amiable mad doctor, and even talked a song ("It Was



A Very Good Year").

His name appeared as editor of And the Darkness Falls (World, 1946, 631 pages, with 72 selections including Lovecraft, C.A. Smith, Collier, Derleth, Doyle, Dunsany); Tales of Terror ('43 Tower); and, in both hardcover & paperback in 1965 & 1967, The Boris Karloff Horror Anthology with Bloch, Sturgeon, HPL, Silverberg, Hamilton and others.

He made numerous phonograph albums

and at the age of 78 recorded for Decca An Evening with Boris Karloff and His Friends, which I was privileged to script.

Producer Alex Gordon (THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE, THE UNDERSEA CITY) had intended that I should play a part opposite Karloff in a projected motion picture MONSTER IN MY BLOOD (from Stuart J. Byrne's "The Metamorphs") but Death has rung down the curtain on that

dream.

From Dave Kyle, who used him daily on his New York radio station WPDM, I learned that Karloff for years had recorded anecdotes from the pages of the Reader's Digest.

His whole stage career is a separate chapter, highlighted by ARSENIC & OLD LACE, PETER PAN, ON BORROWED TIME...

In the last year of his life an historic meeting between him and scientific film maestro Fritz Lang (METROPOLIS,

WOMAN IN THE MOON, SIEGFRIED) was arranged by Robert Bloch. The two elderly statesmen of fantastic films fell in love with each other at first sight, referred to each other for the rest of the night as "the two old dinosaurs."

Karloff has his own star on the sidewalks of Hollywood.

He received two Ann Radcliffe Awards during his lifetime for outstanding contributions to the Gothic field and at the Count Dracula Society's 7th An-



nual Banquet Saturday 19 April at the Knickerbocker Hotel in Hollywood a posthumous award will be made to him for his entire career. This latter action was decided on before his death and I am happy to say he was aware of it.

I have urged the 2d International Film Festival of Rio de Janeiro, during its science fiction film retrospective of March 24 thru 30, to dedicate the sf portion to the memory of Boris Karloff and if possible show THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN and have Elsa Lanchester (the Bride) present for a eulogy for Mr. Karloff.

James Warren will devote the entire 56th issue of Famous Monsters of Film-land to Boris Karloff, with a hoped-for rendition of the Frankenstein monster by Frank Frazetta. The inside front cover of the earliest possible issue of the comiczine Creepy will be devoted to Karloff. I have laid a 4000 word feature about Karloff on the desk of the motion picture editor of the local L.A. Times in the hope that it may be featured in a near future edition of the weekend film section, Calendar. I have agreed to prepare a 60,000 word Memorial (paperback) for Karloff in 10 days--"THE FRANKENSCIENCE MONSTER: The Legend of BORIS KARLOFF"--for which Appreciations have been promised by Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, Christopher Lee and other of his friends & admirers.

The newspaper cliches--"monster of menace actually mild-mannered gentleman"--were absolutely accurate, I can guarantee from personal experiences. I never met a more modest, unassuming, thoughtful, courteous, kind or obliging "great man"--many of the qualities one associates with the late Tony Boucher--and he meant a great deal to me personally as I am sure he did to many of you.

At the risk of calling another idol of mine--HGWells--wrong, Wells, through his character John Cabal in Things to Come, said: "No man is indispensable." He had forgotten Boris Karloff.

Karloff had a daughter, Sara Jane, born on his own birthday, Nov. 23, but there is no son of Frankenstein even to attempt to carry on the Karloff tradition.

He's gone, physically; there'll be no KARLOFF--1970. No "KARLOFF CELEBRATES 100th BIRTHDAY BEFORE CAMERAS!" But his memory will endure; his laurel leaf on the filmic branch of the tree of science fiction will remain secure and evergreen.

Prepare the quintessence of tana leaves and with the pen of Poe let the name of BORIS KARLOFF now be inscribed on the 10-point steel black monolith--the ultimate science fiction accolade that we the grateful living can accord to the dead who served our cause with such consummate distinction.

BRAZIL BECKONS BEDAZZLED BIGWIGS

At least 7 American science fiction writers and Eric Frank Russell of England report varying degrees of astonishment and delight at having been invited, all expenses paid, to Rio de Janeiro to participate in The Science Fiction Literature and the Cinema Symposium of the 2d International Film Festival of Rio!

Round-trip air-flights, first-class hotel accommodations and food from the 23d thru 31st of March have been offered to the so far known: Isaac Asimov, Forrest Ackerman, A. E. van Vogt, Lester del Rey, Philip Jose Farmer, Frederik Pohl & Theodore Sturgeon. It is believed that only Asimov, who under no circumstances will fly, has turned down the invitation, while Pohl is undecided due to a previous speaking engagement. But the California quartet are getting their cholera and yellow fever shots and smallpox boosters and passports and are studying Portuguese for "Which way to the second hand bookshops?" and "Aimez-vous Bram Stoker?" Farmer & Ackerman already know (and intend to use) Esperanto.

There will be a daily Retrospective of Science Fiction Films and the authors will be participating in panels.

Final night during the Awards for Best S.F. Book & Film of 1968, there will be a special ceremony honoring (in person) Arthur C. Clarke & Stanley Kubrick for PLANET OF THE APES. (This report is being written from notes found on Robert Bloch's crumpled shirtsleeve and it is obvious that devious Bob just wanted to be sure you were awake and paying attention). For the first time, and for 2001, the Black Monolith will be given.

Ackerman will cover the affair for the Los Angeles Times and Science Fiction Times. (At slightly different rates.--Editor.)

NEW MOON MAP

The National Geographic Society (Washington, D.C. 20036) has just published a map of the moon showing both sides based on the latest data. Available from the Society for \$1.15 on paper or \$2.30 on plastic. Well worth the price for generalists, it also makes a nice wall decoration.

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS REPRINT

Books For Libraries, Inc. of Freeport, N. Y. is reprinting Robert W. Chambers' King in Yellow as a service to libraries, priced at \$7.50. This edition is being published for libraries which do not believe in paperbacks, or are unaware that a paperback (Ace M132) exists.

BAYCON ON THE RADIO

Radio Station WBAI in New York, and presumably its sister station KPFA in the San Francisco area, is running a series of broadcasts from tapes made of the Baycon program. WBAI programs are as follows:

2/1 - 1pm - Opening speeches
2/8 - 1pm - What sf writers are and aren't doing today
2/15 - 1pm - Ray Bradbury
2/23 - 11:30am - Edgar Rice Burroughs
3/1 - 1pm - Gene Roddenberry
3/8 - 4:30pm - Old Pros panel
3/13 - 1pm - Sci-fi Examines the World of today (panel)
3/22 - 4:30pm - Tolkien Society
3/29 - 4pm - Presentation of Hugos

Also in March WBAI will carry a dramatic reading of Sturgeon's "The Girl Had Guts" (3/9 8:45pm; rebroadcast 3/12 2pm) and a reading in toto in 24 parts of Stapledon's Last and First Men every weekday at 12:30pm, which will continue into April.

BRITISH FANTASY AWARD

The Management Committee of The BSFA Ltd. has announced that owing to various interlocking circumstances the British Fantasy Award is, for the second year in succession, being held in suspension.

Classified Advertising

GRATEFUL: For info from anyone knowing whereabouts of A. Rowley Hilliard, Jack & Dorothy de Courcy, John Taine, Victor Rousseau, Hendrik Dahl Juve, Raymond Z. Gallun, Stanley Mullen, Cleve Cartmill's widow, or relatives or heirs of any of the foregoing who are deceased. Forrest Ackerman, Box 35252 Preuss Sta., Los Angeles, Calif. 90035

SF MAGAZINES FOR SALE: Thousands available. Send want list for price quote. Mid-Town Books, 2229 Fletcher, Chicago, Ill. 60618

TANSTAAFL BUTTONS FOR SALE: 25¢ each, plus 6¢ per order for postage. SFT, Box 216, Syracuse, N.Y. 13209

WANTED: Thrill Book, 10-Story Book, Weird Tales 1923-29, amazingly mint sci-fsy mags with bright spines '23 thru '43, uncommon Atlanteana (fiction), autographed & inscribed works, original artwork by Paul, Finlay, Bok, St. John, and anything else you think might titillate the cents-of-wonder of a 43-year collector without costing a dizzying number of Dollar\$. FJAckerman, Box 35252 Preuss Sta., Los Angeles, Calif. 90035. (Donations to Fantasy Foundation wing of Ackermuseum of Imaginative Material also gratefully accepted.)

FOREIGN CONVENTION NEWS

GERMANY

The International Science Fiction Convention in Heidelberg in 1970 will be held from Friday the 21st to Monday the 24th of August. This is the convention that will become the 1970 World Science Fiction Convention if so voted at StLouiscon. This date has been changed from that previously announced for the con. Some highlights being planned for the GermanCon program are: a moonlight Neckar cruise with a fan dress party, a banquet held in the old Heidelberg castle, and a Bavarian beer night.

AUSTRALIA

This year's Melbourne Science Fiction Convention will again be held at Easter, the 4th-6th of April. In addition to the business session and discussions the program will include a picnic, barbecue, and film festival. This year's convention also inaugurates the Australian Science Fiction Awards to be known as "Ditmars." The categories are: 1) best Australian sf of any length, or collection. 2) best international sf of any length, or collection. 3) best contemporary writer of sf. 4) best Australian amateur sf publication, or fanzine. Voting is to be done by written ballot and any interested Australian may vote.

BALLANTINE ERB PROMOTIONS

Ballantine Books has announced a new promotion of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan and Mars novels for this spring. The ten titles of the Mars series were reissued in February, retaining the original 50¢ cover price.

Scheduled for April publication are the first six of the Tarzan series. These six, appearing in the same order as the previous Ballantine Tarzan series, have new covers but still retain the 50¢ price tag. The balance of the series will also have new covers when published later in the year.

ON THE STAGE

An evening of science fiction and fantasy theater will be presented at the Town Hall Theater, Centerville, Ohio (suburb of Dayton), on Friday and Saturday April 25 and 26 and May 2 and 3.

The double bill will consist of THE VELDT by Ray Bradbury, and DRACULA, BABY!, an original musical comedy based on the Bram Stoker novel with music by Claire Strauch, lyrics by John Jakes, and book by Bruce Ronald. For ticket information write: John Jakes, c/o O/H/C, Inc., 3400 South Dixie, Dayton, Ohio 45439.

THE PHANTOM STRIKES AGAIN
Ackerman Backporch Pilfered
(Fisher Trentworth Reports)

Of course what you have to understand about Ackerman's backporch is that you steal \$4000 worth of material from it and hardly notice anything has happened. Among other things, he has his collection of Doc Savage stored there.

Sometime between approximately 3 in the morning and 11 on the last Sunday in Dec. some person or persons removed a glass pane from the back door of the Ackermansion, cut through the screen and entered, taking an armload of fantastic film stills, pressbooks and similar valuables.

Ackerman tells me that when he discovered the loss he boarded up the door as best he could temporarily, figuring at least that the damage had been done and the thief or thieves surely wouldn't be back that night.

But "they" were. (I'll make it arbitrarily plural from here on. Internal evidence suggests it was a two fan job.) More was taken the second night than the first, so much so that it couldn't all be carried and material was strewn around outside the backporch and halfway down the block to the main intersection.

The third night, "frustrated that they could no longer get in," as FJA tells it: "They let me know they were still interested and on the job by stealing from the outside. Signs like YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE TWILIGHT ZONE and things like that."

"The fourth day, harrassment set in. Somebody got me at my little-known apartment number, New Years Day at about 1:30 in the afternoon, and told me my house was on fire. Something I've worked on--the collection--for 43 years, to try to preserve for posterity, so that kind of joke was about as funny as a blind man's crutch smeared with honey. Followed crazy calls -- 'ghost' calls where no one would say anything -- calls to friends who spend a good deal of time late at night at my place, at their apartment to check whether they were at home or at my address. One insulting call to Wendayne."

Some weeks before a friend had given Forry a sort of warning that someone was in town from a nearby beach city and very possibly would try to break in. Around that time someone did indeed try to get in the back door but apparently was frightened away, unseen, after cutting through the screen. Forry felt it could very well be that person--except for the angle of his living so distant. HOWEVER, when Forry discovered his chief suspect was a houseguest one mile from

him--! he expressed his suspicion to a police officer and two detectives made a house call. No admissions were made but oddly enough most (it is presumed) of the stolen material mysteriously reappeared in a couple of big boxes several hours after the police visited the suspect. Items were very rashly left in the open by garden gate, exposed to the elements (they were not discovered till midnight) and the temptation of any interested party(s) who might have called on Forry in his absence.

There were some odd reactions. Forry had been told, at the time of the Pickering pilferage, that the partner of a local store specializing in science fiction had remarked, "Ackerman surrounds himself by thieves and deserves anything that happens to him." Ackerman found this statement, if ever made or accurately relayed to him, totally ridiculous but felt, at the time of the latest occurrence, he would not risk ridicule by informing the anti-Ackerman store owners of the robbery. He informed other store owners, to whom such goods might be offered, and indeed informed the well-known "left hand" outlet of the querulous store owners, feeling they would promptly get the word; but attitude of the anonymous proprietors, as reported to FJA, was that if they bought any of his stolen goods they would sue him because he had failed to inform them!

Forry called in Walt Daugherty, his all-around aide (he had been in Yucatan at the time of the robberies), who declares, "It will now take Ackerman 5 minutes to get out of his house when he locks it up but it will take anybody else a half hour with a crowbar and dynamite sticks to get in!"

Forry's friends hope so, remembering he had a heart attack 2 years ago, no doubt brought on by an accumulation of too many aggravations.

Forry says: "I just wish it would happen to somebody else for a change. Why me? It's wearisome. Go pick on Ozzie Train the next time. Why Ozzie instead of Moskowitz or de la Ree? Well, they all have great collections but just think of the SFTimes headlines if Ozzie got it: THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY!"

Have You Read?

Cook, David W. "How We Mapped the Moon" National Geographic, Feb. p.240-45 (see news item, p.4 this issue)

Sutcliffe, James Helme. "Report: Hamburg" (Review of "Help, Help the Globolinks," childrens' sf opera) Opera News, Feb. 8, p.32-3

Weaver, Kenneth F. "The Moon" National Geographic, Feb. p.206-39+

Calendar of Events

March

- 1 Dallas Science Fiction Society meeting at home of member. For info: Tom Reamy, 6400 Forest Ln, Dallas, Tex. 75230
- 1 NEOSFS Meeting at home of member. For info: Bill Mallardi, 2345 Newton St, Akron, Ohio 44305
- 1 MASF Meeting at home of member. For info: Jack Chalker, 5111 Liberty Heights Ave, Baltimore, Md. 21207
- 1 ★ CONFERENCE ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SCIENCE FICTION at Harkness Theater, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. at 1pm. Reg: \$1.00. For info: Fred Lerner, 98-B The Blvd E. Paterson, N.J. 07407
- 1 ★ STAR TREK CON at the Newark Public Library, 5 Washington St, Newark, NJ at 1pm. For info: Sherna Burley, 1480 Rt. 46, Apt. 123A, Parsippany, N.J. 07054
- 2 ★ OPEN ESFA at YM-YWCA, 600 Broad St, Newark, N. J., at 3pm. Featured speaker: L. Sprague de Camp.
- 2 Albuquerque SF Group Meeting at home of member. For info: Gordon Benson, Jr, P.O. Box 8124, Albuquerque, N.M.
- 2 Houston SF Society Meeting at home of member. For info: Beth Halphen, 2521 Westgate, Houston, Tex. 77019
- 7 WSFA Meeting at home of Alexis Gilliland, 2126 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, D.C. 20032, at 8pm
- 7 PenSFA Meeting at home of member, at 8:30pm. For info: Mike Ward, Box 45 Mountain View, Calif. 94040
- 7 ValsFA Meeting at home of member. For info: Dwain Kaiser, 1397 N. 2nd Ave, Upland, Calif. 91786
- 8 Minn-Stf Meeting at home of Walter Schwartz, 4138 Wentworth Ave.S, Minneapolis, Minn. 55409, at 12 noon
- 8 Cincinnati Fantasy Group Meeting at home of member. For info: Lou Tabakow, 3953 St. John's Terr, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236
- 9 NESFA Meeting at home of member. For info: NESFA, P. O. Box G, MIT Branch Sta, Cambridge, Mass. 02139
- 14 ACUSFOOS Meeting. For info: Richard Labonte, 971 Walkley Rd, Ottawa 8, Ontario, Canada
- 14 Nameless Ones Meeting at home of member, at 8:30pm. For info: Wally Weber, Box 267, 507 3rd Ave, Seattle Wash. 98104
- 14 Little Men Meeting at home of member at 8pm. For info: Alva Rogers, 5967 Greenridge Rd, Castro Valley, Calif.
- 14 PSFS Meeting at Central YMCA, 15th & Arch Sts, Philadelphia, at 8pm
- 14 FISTFA Meeting at home of John Boardman, 592-16th St, Brooklyn, N.Y., at 9pm
- 15 Chicago SF League Meeting at home of George Price, 1439 W. North Shore Ave, Chicago, Ill. 60626 at 8pm

- 15 MASF Meeting, see March 1
- 15 Lunarian Meeting, at home of Frank Dietz, 655 Orchard St, Oradell, N.J. 07649, at 8pm
- 16 Houston SF Society, see March 2
- 18 Fanatics Meeting at home of Quinn Yarbrow, 369 Colusa, Berkeley, Calif. at 7:30pm
- 21 WSFA Meeting, see March 7
- 21 PenSFA Meeting, see March 7
- 21 ValsFA Meeting, see March 7
- 22 Cincinnati Fantasy Group, see March 8
- 22 Minn-Stf Group Meeting, see March 8
- 22-23 BOSKONE VI, at the Statler Hilton Hotel, Boston. GoH: Jack Gaughan. Reg. fee: \$2.00. For info: Leslie Turek, NESFA, P.O. Box G, MIT Branch Sta, Cambridge, Mass. 02139
- 28 FISTFA Meeting, see March 14
- 28 Little Men Meeting, see March 14
- 28 ACUSFOOS Meeting, see March 14
- 29 Omicron Ceti Three Meeting at home of Estelle Sanders, 131 Edmunton Dr, N. Babylon, L.I., Apt.G-11, at 8:30
- 29 MASF Meeting, see March 1
- 29-30 MARCON 4, at Holiday Inn East, 4701 Broad St, Columbus, Ohio 43227. ★ GoH: Terry Carr. For info: Dannie Plachta, 9147 Roselawn, Detroit, Mich
- 30 OSFA Meeting in Auditorium of the Central St. Louis Library, St. Louis Mo, at 2pm. For info: Ray Fisher, 4404 Forest Pk, St. Louis, Mo. 63108
- 30 OSFiC Meeting in Toronto. For info: Peter Gill, 18 Glen Manor Dr, Toronto 13, Canada

April

- 4-6 BRITISH SF CONVENTION, at the Randolph Hotel, Oxford. GoH: Judith Merril. Reg. fee: \$1 overseas. US. agent: Sam Russell, 1351 Tremaine Ave, Los Angeles, Calif. 90019
- 4-6 MINICON II, at Andrews Hotel, 4th St & Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis, Minn 55401. Membership: \$2. Send to: Minicon Registration, c/o Jim Young, 1948 Ulysses St.NE, Minneapolis, Minn 55418. Checks payable to Mrs. Margaret Lessinger.
- 4-6 MELBOURNE SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION Non-attending membership: \$1.00. For info: Bill Wright, 53 Celia St, Burwood, Victoria 3125, Australia
- 11-13 LUNACON/EASTERCON at the Hotel McAlpin, Herald Sq, New York. GoH: Robert A.W. Lowndes. Advance membership \$2.00. Progress report from: Frank Dietz, 655 Orchard St, Oradell N.J. 07649
- 25-26 CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EARTH at the University of Illinois at Urbana. For info: Jan H. Finder, 809 W. Illinois St, Apt.4, Urbana, Ill. 61801

May

- 9-11 DISCLAVE at the Skyline In, S. Capitol St, Washington, D. C. GoH: Lester del Rey. Registration \$1.50 in advance, \$2.00 at door. For info:

Jack Haldeman, 1244 Woodbourne Ave,
Baltimore, Md. 21212
31-June 2 LUCON in Lund, Sweden. For
info: Mr. Bertil Martensson, Magis-
tratsvägen 55 U:101, 22 44 Lund,
Sweden

June

6-8 PgHLANGE at the Allegheny Motor Inn
1464 Beers School Rd, Coraopolis, Pa
15108. GoH: Robert Silverberg. Adv.
reg: \$1.50, \$2.00 at door. For info:
Peter Hays, 1421 Wightman, Pittsburgh
Pa. 15217

20-22 SOUTHWESTERCON 1969 at the Ramada
Inn, 2525 Allen Pkwy, Houston, Tex.
Reg: \$2.50. For info: Tony Smith,
1414 Lynnview, Houston, Tex. 77055

28-29 MIDWESTCON at the North Plaza
Motel, 7911 Reading Rd, Cincinnati,
Ohio 45237. For info: Lou Tabakow,
3953 St. Johns Terr, Cincinnati,
Ohio 45236. Reg: \$1.00

July

4-6 WESTERCON/FUNCON II at the Miramar
Hotel, Ocean & Wilshire, Santa Mon-
ica, Calif. GoH: Randall Garrett;
Fan GoH: Roy Tackett. Membership \$3
attending, \$1 supporting. Send to:
Ken Rudolph, Box 1, Santa Monica,
Calif. 90406

August

1-4 SFCD-CON 1969, in Düsseldorf, Ger-
many. For info: Peter Schellen, 405
Mönchengladbach, Alsstr. 260, Germany
29-Sept. 1 STLOUISCON, at the Chase Park
Plaza, 212 N. Kingshighway, St. Lou-
is, Mo. 63108. GoH: Jack Gaughan;
Fan GoH: Ted White. \$4 attending,
\$3 supporting & foreign non-attend-
ing, payable to St. Louiscon, Box
3008, St. Louis, Mo. 63130

Meetings held every week:

Colorado Fantasy Society
Sat. at homes of various members,
Denver area. For info: Caz, Box 550
Evergreen, Colo. 80439 (ph. 674-4246,
local from Denver)

CD/SFS

Sat. at homes of various members, at
7pm. For info: Bob Gaines, 336 Ol-
entangy St, Columbus, Ohio 43202.

Fellowship of the Purple Tongue

Sat. at home of Phil Walker, Apt. 3,
1308 Boissevain Ave, Norfolk, Va.
23510, at 2pm

LASFS

Thurs. at home of Tom Digby, 330 S.
Berendo, Los Angeles, Calif. at 8pm

MoSFA

Mon. in Brady Commons, Univ. of Mis-
souri at Columbia campus, at 7:30pm

MSU Fantasy & Science Fiction Society
Fri., in lower lounge of South Hub-
bard Hall, on Michigan State Univ.
campus, at 8pm. For info: Tracie

Brown, 151 Mason, MSU, E. Lansing,
Mich. 48823 (ph. 355-1957)

University of Chicago SF Society

Tues. at Ida Noyes Hall on the Univ.
of Chicago campus, at 7:30pm. For
info: Mike Bradley, 5400 Harper, Apt
1204, Chicago, Ill.

Western Pennsylvania SF Association

Sun. at 2pm. For info: Peter Hays,
1421 Wightman, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217

S F Forecasts

F&SF -- April

Novelettes

DEEPER THAN THE DARKNESS by Greg
Benford

TROUBLE ON KORT by William M. Lee

Short Stories

SOME VERY ODD HAPPENINGS AT KIBBLE-
SHAM MANOR HOUSE by Michael Har-
rison

NOT LONG BEFORE THE END by Larry
Niven

THE HOUSE by P.M. Hubbard

THE FREAK by P. Wyal

Science

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING PEOPLE by
Isaac Asimov

Cover by Bert TANNER for "Deeper Than
the Darkness"

COMING FROM DELACORTE PRESS

Vonnegut, Kurt. Slaughterhouse-five, or
the Children's Crusade. March. \$5.95

Oboler, Arch. House on Fire (supernat-
ural fty) April. \$6.95

Löfgren, Ulf. Felix Forgetful (juv fty)
May. \$4.50

Merril, Judith, ed. SF 13. Aug. \$5.95

COMING FROM MIRAGE PRESS

Bloch, Robert. Dragons and Nightmares.
March.

Quinn, Seabury. Is the Devil a Gentle-
man? June.

CLUB NEWS

A new club, the Dallas Science Fic-
tion Society (DaSFS), meets the first
Saturday of the month at various mem-
bers' homes, and had 20 fans at the sec-
ond meeting. The club was formed for sf
fans, leaving another club, Hydra, now
2 or 3 years old, to the comic fans. A
club genzine, titled DJ, will be pub-
lished monthly (hopefully), and contri-
butions are requested. It will be ed-
ited by Joe Bob Williams, 8733 Bound-
brook, Dallas, Texas 75231.

LASFS election results: Director,
Dave Hulan; Secretary, June Moffatt;
Treasurer, Bruce Pelz; Committeemen,
Fred Patten and Cathy Konigsberg; Board
of Directors, Tom Digby, Lee Klingstein
and John Trimble.

Western Pa. SF Association elections:
President, Greg Moore; Ginger Buchanan,
Secretary; and Dana Benatan, Treasurer.

Bibliomania

NEW HARDCOVERS

- Appleton, Victor II. Tom Swift and His Dyna-4 Capsule (juv) Grosset, 1969. \$1.50
- Brett, Leo. The Alien Ones. Arcadia, Jan. \$3.50
- Creasey, John. The Flood (reprint) Walker, Jan. \$3.95
- Davidson, Avram. The Phoenix and the Mirror. Doubleday, Feb. \$4.95
- Disch, Thomas M. Camp Concentration. Doubleday, Jan. \$5.95
- Gentry, Curt. The Last Days of the Late, Great State of California (borderline) Putnam, Oct. \$6.95
- Gilman, Robert Cham. The Navigator of Rhada (juv) Harcourt, 1969. \$4.25
- Greenberg, Martin. The Terror of Art: Kafka and Modern Literature. Basic, Oct. 1968. \$5.95
- Halacy, D.S. Return from Luna (juv) Norton, Jan. \$3.95
- Hay, Jacob and John M. Keshishian. Autopsy for a Cosmonaut. Little Brown, 1969. \$5.95
- Hill, Elizabeth Starr. Pardon My Fangs (juv fty) Holt, Jan. \$2.95
- Knight, Damon, ed. Orbit 4. Putnam, Dec. 1968. \$4.95
- Kropp, Lloyd. The Drift (fty) Doubleday, Feb. \$4.95
- LeFanu, Sheridan. The House by the Churchyard (reprint) Stein & Day, 1968. \$6.95
- Ley, Willy. Another Look at Atlantis and fifteen other essays. Doubleday Feb. \$5.95
- Lightner, A.M. Day of the Drones (juv) Norton, Jan. \$3.95
- Lindop, Audrey Erskine. Sight Unseen (supernatural horror) Doubleday, Jan. \$5.95
- Pohl, Fredrik. The Age of the Pussyfoot Trident, Feb. \$4.95
- Randall, Florence Engel. The Place of Sapphires (horror) Harcourt, Jan. \$4.95
- Sallaska, Georgia. Three Ships and Three Kings (fty) Doubleday, Jan. \$5.95
- Van Gulik, Robert. The Haunted Monastery (tr, supernatural fty) Scribner, Jan. \$3.95
- Young, Francis Brett. Cold Harbour (reprint, supernatural terror) Norton, 1968. \$4.95

NEW PAPERBACKS

- Bain, Willard. Informed Sources (exp; orig private printing: Day East Received) Doubleday, Jan. \$2.95
- Boggon, Martyn. The Inevitable Hour. Award A398, Jan. 75¢
- Brunner, John. The Jagged Orbit. Ace 38120, Feb. 95¢
- Meeting at Infinity. Ace 62400, Feb 60¢

- Bulmer, Kenneth. The Doomsday Men (reprint) Curtis Books 123-07002-075, 1968? 75¢
- Burroughs, Edgar Rice. A Princess of Mars (reissue) Ballantine U2031, Feb. 50¢
- The Gods of Mars (reissue) Ballantine U2032, Feb. 50¢
- The Warlord of Mars (reissue) Ballantine F711, Feb. 50¢
- Thuvia, Maid of Mars (reissue) Ballantine F770, Feb. 50¢
- The Chessman of Mars (reissue) Ballantine F776, Feb. 50¢
- The Master Mind of Mars (reissue) Ballantine U2036, Feb. 50¢
- A Fighting Man of Mars (reissue) Ballantine U2037, Feb. 50¢
- Swords of Mars (reissue) Ballantine U2038, Feb. 50¢
- Synthetic Men of Mars (reissue) Ballantine U2039, Feb. 50¢
- Llana of Gathol (reissue) Ballantine F762, Feb. 50¢
- Catling, Patrick Skene. The Experiment (sex, borderline, reprint) Pocket Books 77031, Jan. 95¢
- Churchward, James. The Second Book of the Cosmic Forces of Mu (orig: Cosmic Forces As They Were Taught in Mu Relating to the Earth, v.2; #5 in series, reprint) Paperback Library 54-754, Sept. 1968. 75¢
- Dawson, James. Hell Gate (reprint) Paperback Library 64-047, Jan. 75¢
- Fletcher, Mary. The Devil's Instrument (supernatural) Lancer 74-987, Jan. 75¢
- Geis, Richard E. The Endless Orgy (ssf) Brandon House 2061, 1968? \$1.25
- Grant, Joan. Winged Pharaoh (reprint, fty) Berkley Medallion N1646, Jan. 95¢
- Greenfield, Irving A. The Others. Lancer 74-994, Feb. 75¢
- James, Henry. In the Cage and Other Tales (supernatural fty, reissue) Norton, Jan. \$1.95
- Kastle, Herbert. The Reassembled Man (reissue) Fawcett Gold Medal R2041, Jan. 60¢
- Kirk, Russell. Old House of Fear (reissue, horror) Avon S332, Jan. 60¢
- Knebel, Fletcher and C.W. Bailey. Seven Days in May (reissue, borderline) Bantam Q4418, Jan. \$1.25
- Kyle, Robert. Venus Examined (ssf, reprint) Fawcett Crest M1228, Jan. 95¢
- Lanning, George. The Pedestal (supernatural horror, reprint) Avon S376, Nov. 1968. 60¢
- Lymington, John. The Night Spiders (reprint) Curtis Books 123-070060075, 1968? 75¢
- Lytle, Andrew. A Name for Evil (supernatural fty, reissue) Avon S382, Jan. 60¢
- McCall, Anthony. Holocaust (reprint) Pocket Books 55052, Jan. 60¢
- McDaniel, David. The Hollow Crown Affair: Man from UNCLE #17. Ace 51700 Jan. 50¢

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A Look At Sex In SF

THE OBJECT AT HAND: THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST (An Exorcism: Ritual 1) Postscript
by Theodore Sturgeon. Essex House 0108, November 1968. 255 p. \$1.95

by J.B. Post

by Ted White

The first thing I noticed about this book is that it is printed in 8 point California Pornographic. This book is printed like a dirty book, published like a dirty book, distributed like a dirty book, and has lots of four letter words describing copulation and fellatio like a dirty book. Is this a dirty book? I don't know. It was brought to my attention by a friend who works in a book store specializing in what are euphemistically called "stroke books." This store also has one of the better sf stocks in town. He gave me a copy and wanted to know my reaction. Well, Nick, let me tell you...

The story line is in some ways intriguing. Herald Childe, private detective in Los Angeles, is not very happy about viewing a movie sent to the police, a movie which shows his partner having his genitals chewed off by a woman with steel teeth. Following a hunch that vampirism (as a psychiatric not supernatural phenomenon) is involved, he runs down a lead to a mysterious Baron Igescu through a collector of the outre, Woolston Q. Heepish. The Baron is the baddie. After erotic and slapstick encounters with the Baron's cohorts, Childe, with the aid of a ghost, destroys most of them, including a very unpleasant were-pig. Mr. Farmer presents some interesting ideas about vampires etc. but more questions are raised than are settled. Hopefully in ensuing volumes these questions can be put to rest. The whole sordid mess takes place in a Los Angeles of the not too distant future where a putrid and disgusting green smog blankets everything.

So much for the story, though the existence of a story line is one thing that sets this off from traditional pronography. Usually there is the flimsiest of stories to connect the erotic scenes; the story can be removed without seriously affecting such a work. In Mr. Farmer's book the erotic passages could be removed or rewritten without doing any damage to the story. From a reader's viewpoint (at least this reader's) the cliches about copulation are totally extraneous. Now, they may be absolutely necessary from the author's viewpoint -- I guess it depends on what and from whom he is exorcising. My own view is that erotic writing has no place in sf. Erotic theme is something else, however. Most erotic writing is just plain bad and boring writing. It usually becomes a

(Continued on Page 13)

It had to happen. I mean, it was inevitable. The soft-core pornography of the Nightstand Books and their ilk was transformed into rank, full-blown, hard core porno a year or two ago, when Brandon House (the parent publisher of the Essex House line) and Nightstand (as Greenleaf Classics) more or less simultaneously dipped their toes with the publication of several Marcus van Heller Olympia Press books. Those first few books were cut a little from the Paris editions -- a few of the more explicit phrases were deleted -- but they were nonetheless hardcore porno. They existed solely in justification of their sex scenes, and the sex scenes existed solely to arouse the reader. One-handed books, we used to call them: jack-off books.

So it was inevitable that sooner or later someone would think of wedding this new, "adult" pseudo-art-form with science fiction. I mean, why not? The new science fiction is "speculative fiction" anyway, right? And pushing back the frontiers and all that? Escaping from the bonds of our crummy old pulp heritage, and like that?

The first result is The Image of the Beast. And because it has explicit sex scenes designed to arouse you (or at least written in hard-core erotic terms) the price is \$1.95 for a cheaply produced paperback book, instead of the more reasonable 60¢ or 75¢ that most sf paperbacks are presently going for. (Can you remember when a paperback sold for a quarter? When it didn't even carry a price tag because everyone knew it sold for a quarter? Ah, but I'm a reactionary.) Which isn't to say that you don't get a little class for your buck ninety-five: the package is clean and attractive (Essex, like Brandon, has excellent graphics), and for lagniappe there's a "Postscript by Theodore Sturgeon."

In the first two and a half pages of his Postscript, Sturgeon warns us against Labels and Labellers in his best Messianic voice. He then breaks and tells us "Philip Jose Farmer is a superb writer and in every sense a good man..." which is a gross piece of labelling totally unsubstantiated by the book to which it is appended. I've said this before, but it bears repeating: Philip Jose Farmer could be a saint, an absolute Saint! -- but that does not make him a good writer, or even a particularly insightful writer. And to tell a reader what a genuinely fine man

Philip Jose Farmer (or any other writer) is, is simply to indulge in an irrelevancy. If the book is a good one, such praise is superfluous. If it isn't, then it can only impress us with the insincerity of the man who wrote such praise, and leave us with the lingering question, "Is he trying to snow me?" As for Farmer, the "superb writer," those of us who have followed Farmer's career know better: Farmer writes from one of the most brilliantly untrammelled imaginations I've ever known, but he seems lacking that self-critical faculty which would allow him to shape and edit his own work. The results have often been abortive, and the hallmark of Farmer has been the imprisonment of his glowing ideas in wooden and inflexible prose. Summed up in one word, Farmer is not "superb," he's "uneven."

Perhaps one reason for this lies in Sturgeon's statement that Farmer "seems to have been born with the knowledge that the truth -- the real truth -- is to be sought with the devotion of those who sought the Holy Grail, and to be faced openly, even when it turned out to be something that he and the rest of us would much rather it wasn't."

People who seek Truth in their fiction often disturb me, because it seems to me that in their holy quest they frequently let themselves become sidetracked. And 'truth' is not 'story.' Indeed, 'truth' is sometimes not Truth.

"PHILIP JOSE FARMER spurted on the scene in 1952..." says the semi-biographical blurb facing the title page. I stopped, stared at that sentence for a long moment, and then tried to figure out what would-be elfin impulse had led the blurb-writer to choose "spurted" for his verb. I mean, Essex House publishes sex books, sure...but was its editorial staff that sex-oriented? It did not seem to bode well. I put a pencil checkmark in the margin and pagged on.

In the opening third of the book I littered the pages with pencilled notations. The book was a chore to read, and perhaps the following quotes will give you an idea why:

"The green and sour odor and taste came not only from the smog, which had forced its tendrils into the air-conditioned building, nor from the tobacco plumes in the room."...p.5

"What could he say? Only he and a psychotherapist would ever be able to find out." ...p.16

"'See you,' Bruin said. He put a heavy paw on Childe's shoulder for a second. 'Doing it for nothing, eh? He was your partner, right? But you was going to split up, right? Yet you're going to find out who killed him, right?'" ...p.17

"Only he and a psychotherapist would ever know..." ...p.18

The first quote is a good example of Farmer's heavy clumsiness with words. While most of the book is not this grammatical, much of the narration lumbers along in the same earnest, expository style. The second and fourth quotes fall only two pages apart, but refer to two different men (a police commissioner, and the protagonist). The third quote introduces, for gawd's sake, this information: that the dead man was Childe's partner (in a detective agency) and that even though they were on the verge of breaking up, he must get the man's killer. Hammett handled this hoary notion with finesse in The Maltese Falcon; Farmer throws it at you with all the subtlety of his ham-handed imagery (a cop named "Bruin" has a "paw" for a hand, get it?).

Fortunately, after the opening third of the book it picks up, since about then the real story begins. The real story? you're asking. What is the real story?

Basically, The Image of the Beast is a crude smorging-together of three or four old pulp-genre forms. It is first of all a private detective story. Herald Childe (how's that for a symbolic name, huh? And get this: he's the spitting image of Lord Byron!) is the detective and protagonist. Childe is explained to us (he was fascinated by Sherlock Holmes as a boy, he has a marriage that fell apart, he seems to have scruples) but never comes alive in any real sense. Compared to the detectives of Hammett, Chandler, MacDonald, et al, he is still-born. The plot of the book revolves around his attempt to avenge the death of his partner, first by finding his killers and then by doing them in. He seems singularly inept at both; the long arm of coincidence is stretched to the breaking point more than once. Not all the loose ends are tied together at the end either.

Secondly, the book is a sado-masochistic horror story, in the vein of those "spicy" pulps of the late thirties. The killers are were-creatures and apparently dedicated (without explanation) to perpetuating outrages of evil, solely for amusement. This is handled relatively well. In fact, Farmer's imagination comes most alive here, in his invention of genuinely evil horrors (mostly sexual in nature), and in evoking horrifyingly dark images. The final third of the book takes place in an incredibly vast old house, riddled with secret passages, and acrawl with monsters of varying appetites; and the tension sustained throughout this section was enough to keep me pinned to my chair reading it long after I wanted to knock off for the night and go to bed. Farmer works with cliché materials, but finds fresh validity in them.

Thirdly, the book is nominally sci-

ence fiction, on several counts. To begin with, it is set a half-dozen years or so in the future (the date is never given, but Childe drives "a 1970 Oldsmobile" which one doubts is new), during an unprecedented smog buildup in Los Angeles (hence that quote about the green and sour odor and taste of the smog). The smog, its effects and the reaction to it of the populace is well handled and adds tension to the earlier parts of the book where none would otherwise have existed. This is a standard gambit: the building-weather-background. Others, notably Raymond Chandler, have also used it to good effect. More important, a "science-fictional" explanation is given for the were-creatures: they are from other dimensions, other universes, and have blundered into our world. Seeking viable forms in this universe, they have become the creatures of human superstitions. Farmer handles this better than my bald explanation would indicate, which is to say that he did make it work. That says something for his writing ability, in any case.

Finally, the book is a work of hard-core pornography. About this Farmer seems to have been the most ambivalent. I gather that he wanted to make his sex scenes both explicit (since that is the one "freedom" Essex gave him over publication elsewhere) and relevant, which is to say that he has tried to integrate them with plot and characterization. Unfortunately, for the most part he has failed.

There is a sharp difference between hard-core porno and erotic realism. The difference lies in the method of attack; and by way of example, I suggest a side-by-side comparison of Norman Mailer's "The Time of Her Time" (which can be found in his Advertisements for Myself) and virtually any of the sex scenes in The Image of the Beast. I think that erotic realism has a place in science fiction -- that it belongs wherever it is appropriate in a story. By which I mean that when two (or more) people in a science fiction story have sex, it should be described in as much detail as is necessary to the function of the overall story, in terms of insight into the characters and relevancy to their later behavior. Very few writers in sf have attempted this as yet. I tried it myself in an early book (The Sorceress of Qar) and when I now try to read those scenes I am embarrassed for myself and find them unreadable because I know I failed to do that which I had wanted to do. Alexei Panshin has a lovely little sex scene late in his Rite of Passage which moved me profoundly because of its delicacy and appropriateness. Philip K. Dick conveyed a sex scene in his The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch by the use of pedestrian conversation between the partners; that

scene was one of brilliant insight. But little else stands out in my memory. Most attempts at erotic realism in science fiction (including my own, on that occasion) have been clumsy renderings of pornographic clichés filtered through the purple-tinted lenses of Romance.

Farmer dispenses with the romantic tinges. There is no love expressed or implied between any of his characters at any point in his book. Indeed, in the scenes between Childe and his ex-wife, Sybil, Farmer does a rather good job of describing the bleakness of a relationship long gone sour and fallen into acrimonious habit-patterns. However, all of the sex scenes in the book are described in lascivious detail, and the language is totally unsubtle.

There is a great deal of sex in the book, of course. The book opens with the viewing of a movie wherein Childe's partner is seen to be mutilated and (presumably) killed; the detail in which Farmer dwells on his mutilation was enough to turn my stomach. Presumably that was Farmer's intention. The sado-masochistic flavor predominates throughout the book although to varying degrees. Much of this is relevant: the participants are the were-creatures and, as I mentioned, totally evil by nature. But even the more 'normal' sex has unhealthy overtones. Most of these, I suspect, are a product of the form. Present-day American pornography is growing obsessed with 'unnatural' sex, probably because this is what most readers have least often. Homosexual themes, flagellation, etc., are presently in hottest demand, and under the circumstances I suppose Farmer's concentration upon oral-genital sex almost to the exclusion of everything else is rather mild stuff.

The problem is that although we can look upon this book as an attempt to upgrade pornography, we can (and must) also look upon it as a cheapening of science fiction and of Farmer. Not because it contains explicit sex, but because it contains a lower level of writing: the sex scenes are written to pornographic standards; they are crude, unsubtle, and ultimately they cheapen the writing quality of the rest of the book.

In fact, for a book perhaps intended to extend the frontiers of speculative fiction, this is a surprisingly retrograde work. It is, put simply, trashy. It is trashy on each of its four levels because it seems to be inspired by the trash in each of those four genres, and it transcends none of them.

There were some other points about the book which I want to remark upon. The smog situation has created panic, and the phone exchanges are tied up. This is fine, but Farmer has obviously never experienced a tie-up, because he

describes it as busy signals no matter what number you dial. Actually, an exchange tie-up is indicated by the absence of a dial tone; you never get to make a call, much less find the lines all busy.

Later on, at the beginning of a seduction, Farmer has Childe say, "But before we go any further, you should know I'm unprepared. I don't have any rubbers." Already the Pill has made rubber prophylactics obsolete; a half dozen years from now I expect contraception will be even further advanced, probably with a pill for men. Bad extrapolation.

Recently I published a book wherein a savage woman bites off the penis of a man who was attempting to orally rape her. I left the entire scene off-stage and had the man expire from his wound over a period of half an hour or so. Nonetheless, an hysterical female fan in the southwest wrote letters to several fanzines berating me for the scene and questioning the medical validity of it. I commend to her the top three paragraphs of page 135 in The Image of the Beast. And I shall wait impatiently for her next outburst on the subject.

Finally, I note a comment I wrote several times in the margins of this book: "No pace" and "Monotonous tone of porno."

I spoke earlier of Farmer's wooden prose, and of the still-born quality of his protagonist. All are related. Farmer's pacing, even of intrinsically exciting (non-sexual) scenes, is slow and plodding. His style lacks crispness, verve, or even movement. He simply describes a continuing sequence of occurrences. There is no ebb and flow -- or very little, at any rate, until the closing chapters -- no sense of tension and release. He does not construct scenes in which specific events take place nearly so much as he simply goes through an often monotonous recitation of events, very much like a bad convention report in which the author simply describes everyone he met. This is most apparent in the early chapters because they are constructed on the model of the mystery-detective story, and the contrast is therefore more noticeable. This is a basic failure of Farmer's writing, because it exists on several simultaneous levels: sentence construction, pacing, and scene construction.

Put more simply, Farmer writes synopses of action; he doesn't show it to you.

It may have been a mistake for me to categorize this as the "monotonous tone of porno," even though this is a common fault in pornography (most writing faults can be found in porno, because the stuff is largely hackwork), because Farmer's sex scenes are probably his

best-realized, in these terms. That is rather ironic, I'm afraid.

But although we follow Childe through a series of incredible adventures, we get very little feeling that he is experiencing them. Instead, he is a wooden actor walking through the dress rehearsal of a plot he must already (if only subconsciously) know. Events which would thoroughly demoralize a man and other events which would completely exhaust him, pass on without comment or reaction.

Childe is an old-fashioned pulp hero. He serves purely as an automaton into which the reader is expected to put his own identity and reactions. He is a vehicle for the reader's vicarious adventures. He needs no sleep, he has the very minimum of his own personality; he is, for all his oft-remarked-upon resemblance to Lord Byron, faceless.

Pulp trash.

I'm sorry, but there it is: a label. But not an unthinking label, and not a label of my manufacture. Fault Farmer for it -- he wrote the book, and he is responsible for its ultimate cheapness and sleaziness. He is responsible for the book.

There it is.

A LOOK AT SEX IN SF by J.B. Post, cont.

mass of cliches.

This book will offend many readers but it's always better to be offended first hand by reading a book than hearing rumors bandied about. This is a book to read and make up one's own mind about. Younger fans had best keep this away from parents, though. I wish Mr. Farmer had not chosen this road to follow, but having chosen it, he will have at least two readers to accompany him -- Theodore Sturgeon (who wrote a brief postscript for the book) and me. In case you don't have a neighborhood pornographer, the publisher's address is 7311 Fulton Ave, North Hollywood, Calif 91605.

NEW PAPERBACKS cont. from p.9

Neill, Robert. Witch Bane (supernatural horror, reprint) Avon S377, Nov. 1968. 60¢

Robeson, Kenneth. Dust of Death (Doc Savage 32) Bantam F3937, Jan. 50¢

Steen, Marguerite. The Unquiet Spirit (supernatural fty, reprint) Avon S383, Jan. 60¢

Torro, Pel. Galaxy 666 (reprint) Tower 42-195, 1968. 50¢

Treece, Henry. The Green Man (fty, reprint) Paperback Library, Sept. 1968 95¢

Van Vogt, A.E. The Silkie. Ace 76500, Feb. 60¢

Verne, Jules. For the Flag (reprint) Ace 24800, Feb. 60¢

Reviews

A GLASS OF STARS by Robert F. Young.
Harris-Wolfe, Oct. 1968. 356 p. \$5.95

It seems I have been a Robert F. Young fan for years and never knew it. Most of the stories in this collection I had read before and really enjoyed, but had never realized they had all been written by Mr. Young. I wish to apologize to Mr. Young for not recognizing his genius sooner.

The stories ("Boy Meets Dyevitza," "Star Mother," "L'Arc de Jeanne," "On the River," "Neither Do They Reap," "To Fell a Tree," "Wish Upon a Star," "The Fugitives," "The Pyramid Project," "Thirty Days Had September," "Little Dog Gone," "The Grown-Up People's Feet," and "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory") are prefaced by Fritz Leiber's introductory essay on Mr. Young. Aside from "Star Mother" and "The Grown-Up People's Feet," two poignant nothings, the stories range from readable to real knock-outs. My own favorite is "To Fell a Tree" though that came only after much debate with myself. If one (at least this one) wants to cry "Cornball" or "schmaltz," it can only be done after reading the stories -- while one is reading each tale one is completely captivated by Mr. Young's prose and the world he creates with it. This is a book for everyone to read.

And keep your eye on Harris-Wolfe & Co. -- they have been doing some fine sf lately. --J.B. Post

THE DOUBLE PLANET by Isaac Asimov. Pyramid T1905, Nov. Rev. ed. 159 p. 75¢

While this book lacks the usual wit of Dr. Asimov's essays in F&SF, it is nonetheless readable. It is one of a series of books originally published by Abelard Schuman designed to explain the sciences to those who know very little about them. Dr. Asimov once again demonstrates that he can make difficult concepts comprehensible. It is to his credit that while writing of the Earth and the Moon he is able to work in a history of exploration, a history of the earth sciences (briefly), and clear explanations of gravity, escape velocity, atmospheric divisions, etc. While the average fan may find this work too elementary, it is certainly a perfect book to give as a gift to young friends and relatives to set them on the proper course. The three appendices (Some Facts About the Earth, Some Facts About the Moon, A Table of Dates) provide a quick reference source to check for general information. Of course, if you don't know all about things like tides, gravity, air pressure, you had better buy this book and learn.

--J.B. Post

CROYD by Ian Wallace. Berkley X1616, Oct. 184 p. 60¢ (hardcover: Putnam, 1967. \$3.95)

I truly haven't made up my mind about this novel. It is either a great put-on or a miserable failure.

Croyd is "a superhuman secret agent of the future, who has the ability to move himself and events uptime or downtime." Don't ask me what uptime or downtime is, because I'm still puzzling that out.

Croyd also has the ability to become a part of other people's psyches. Unfortunately, being able to enter another's psyche does not guarantee one's getting out. And, in his attempt to foil the deadly plans of an alien agent against our planet, Croyd finds himself trapped in a woman's body, his own body having been taken over by the enemy alien.

I just don't know about this novel.

--D.C. Paskow

GENESIS FIVE by Henry Wilson Allen. Morrow, Nov. 256 p. \$5.95

Lately it has been my misfortune to read several unsatisfactory books. This is one of them. The first-person narration is handled rather awkwardly. The narrator is a Mongol and never lets the reader forget the fact with his constant Mongol this and Mongol that. The story takes place in Russia where one assumes Russian is spoken, yet there are rather bad English puns throughout. And the story is silly, fit for a grade C monster movie.

Yuri Suntar, recent graduate of the Moscow Academy for Politics, is sent, or kidnapped, to the Arctic laboratory of Dr. Ho Wu Chen where a race of supermen are supposed to be created. After four failures Dr. Ho is sure the fifth group will succeed. There is silly talk about "wolf virus" for which the reader should substitute "genetic manipulation," a term which doesn't cause one to gag. Gathering a few allies from deep-freeze and a slave labor force, our boy Yuri makes a shambles of the lab. The fifth genesis is also a failure, the swarm being humanoid with bee stingers in their navels, faceted wolf eyes, human hands with wolf claws, and a lust to kill. Turned loose they force Dr. Ho to destroy the lab. Can't wait until they make a movie out of this! Oh, what fun. Yuri & company escape along with the granddaughter of Dr. Ho and try to reach Alaska. It's a nice try but they go down and the book is Yuri telling his story.

The jacket blurb says "Spine-tingling science fiction -- a wild and fantastic adventure -- with a chilling climax and a real message." Where?

--J.B. Post

OPERATION: PHANTASY edited by Donald A. Wollheim. Distr. by Don Grant, 1967. 59 p. \$4.00

THE NECRONOMICON: A STUDY by Mark Owings. Mirage Press, 1968. 30 p. \$1.95

H.P. LOVECRAFT: A PORTRAIT by W. Paul Cook. Mirage Press, Sept. 1968. 66 p. \$2.95

The contents page of Operation: Phantasy reads like a roster of Weird Tales greats -- Lovecraft, Howard, Kuttner, C. A. Smith, Derleth, Bloch. However, it isn't a Weird Tales anthology as one would suspect, but rather a selection from an amateur journal which Don Wollheim edited back in the halcyon days of his youth. While the volume is slim, it offers a choice variety of good solid stuff. Wollheim provides an interesting, nostalgic introduction which paints a partial picture of fandom in the early days. Kuttner's piece, "Sunken Towers," is infused with the taint of darkest sorcery which made his Elak of Atlantis stories so good. Bloch's contribution is true to form for the man who has "the heart of a child -- in a jar, on his desk." Lovecraft freaks out on a trip that is just as terrifying and violent as those taken by the acid-trippers of today's hip generation. There's a sample of Abe Merritt's hauntingly beautiful prose and Bob Howard's "Song at Midnight" is an inspired poem reminiscent of his Solomon Kane tales. Several other items round out the collection, making it a fine little collector's item.

Also, two items of Lovecraftian interest. the Lovecraft scholars should enjoy The Necronomicon: A Study. The book is the end-product of typical fan-nish enthusiasm and the author dissects that fabled volume with diligent aplomb. There is a "History and Chronology" by Lovecraft, reprinted from the out-of-print collection Beyond the Wall of Sleep. Owings' nine page article, "The Existing Copies -- a Bibliography," is the best item in the book, though I still fail to understand the mechanism by which a book expires in a fire. "Quotations" from the Necronomicon finish the book. The book also comes complete with 60 footnotes for those of you who care to verify the facts as they appear. As I said, for the Lovecraft scholar.

To appease the Lovecraft fan there is Cook's excellent H. P. Lovecraft: A Portrait. The title is a bit misleading though; at best it is a portrait of Lovecraft the man, not Lovecraft the writer. Cook tells us Lovecraft was a man who "had created a shell and crawled into it." The portrait is that of a lonely recluse, sheltered from the world, a night creature withdrawn into the turmoil and false security of a

magnificently woven fantasy.

At first Cook's style is dismally disjointed and incoherent but he soon finds himself and the words flow freely. The book is entirely anecdotal and as such would seem as much a picture of Cook as Lovecraft were it not for Cook's incisive and picturesque appraisals of Lovecraft's character as it evolved during their twenty-year friendship. Do get it.

--R. Brisson

THE LION OF COMARRE & AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT by Arthur C. Clarke. Harcourt, Oct. 1968. 214 p. \$4.75

Libraries and Clarke completists will be happy with this reissuing of two stories. I am happy that now Against the Fall of Night is once more available and nascent fans can follow my old course of reading in public libraries. Both stories, as Mr. Clarke points out, have surface similarities. Both concern young men rejecting the values of their society and searching out the unknown and forbidden. In Lion, the young man is Richard Peyton III who wishes to become an engineer, a profession in Century 26 comparable to a street sweeper of today in terms of status. It is discovered that he is the biological double of Rolf Thordarsen, creator of the forbidden city of Comarre. Peyton discovers that Comarre is filled with mechanisms which induce dreams, dreams that give each dreamer their hearts desire. Being accidentally awakened from his dream, he manages to gather the microfilm data on the construction of Comarre and escape to start a new renaissance.

Alvin, last child born in Diaspar (last city on Earth), rebels against the stagnation of his seeming perfect society with its near-immortality and machines which give all of life's needs. Attempting to escape from Diaspar, he discovers a way to the only other inhabited spot on Earth, Lys. In the ruins of Shalmirane Alvin acquires a robot which leads him to a space ship. Fighting the entrenched conservatism of both Diaspar and Lys, he leaves Earth in the completely automatic space ship to visit the former capital of the galactic civilization which has long vanished. Discovered by Vanamonde, a disembodied intellect created by the galactic civilization, he returns to Earth with it. A new day dawns for Earth.

Even after all these years, I can say I enjoyed this novel almost as much at this reading as when I first read it in the pulpy pages of Startling Stories. The optimism may be out of date and it may seem naive, but the Stapledonian vision remains intact.

--J.B. Post

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