

SF/Fantasy News/Review 'Zine -- 4th Nov. '73 Issue -- (Vol. 20, #2; Whole #116)
 Editor & Publisher: Don Miller - - - - - 25¢ per copy, 10/\$2.00

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In Brief --

As you all could see from #155, our field maintenance didn't solve the inking problem. We typed #'s 116 and 117 the week of Nov. 11, but have been holding back in expectation of correction of the problem by (1) a friend who promised to come by last weekend to see what he could find out about the problem (he's a mimeo repairman by trade), but never did, or (2) a regular repairman from Gestetner, who was supposed to come yesterday (but didn't). In the interim, we've also been trying to fix the problem on our own. In hopes that our additional action may have done some good, we're running off this issue on Thanksgiving morning, and expect to mail it on 23 Nov. If most copies still have light patches in the middle, the problem's still with us. If it's fixed, we'll run off #117 (with the appropriate announcement) over the weekend, and things will start to move once more.

One casualty of the mimeo problem has been the early Dec. publication date of TWJ #83; with the inking as bad as it has been, we stopped typing stencils, until we found out whether or not the problem could be fixed (if it couldn't, we were planning to switch to offset ahead of schedule, and didn't want a bunch of stencils already typed, with no way to run them off). The deadline for receipt of material for #83 has therefore been extended to 1 Dec. '73.

One more problem on the horizon is the strong possibility that we will enter the hospital on Dec. 5 for eye surgery. If this occurs, TWJ #83 won't make it until January--and there will probably be at least a month without SOTWJ's, if not longer. It will be at least three months before we can be fitted with post-operative glasses, so it will all depend on whether we can see well enough to type after surgery but before new lenses. If not, SOTWJ will fall so far behind it will take us six months to get caught up after we begin publishing again, and TWJ will either be published by WSFA or not at all during the first half of 1974 (until after DISCON II, i.e., as we are still planning a seven-week trip to London next summer). (If we do have Dec. 5 eye surgery, TWJ#83 will be offset and pub. by WSFA, if at all.)

So, things are rather uncertain at the moment--we may or may not have a functional mimeo--and we may or may not have functional eyesight.... We'll try to have some definite word in either #117 or #118. (Just wanted to give you a bit of advance warning, in case the worst comes to pass....)

TWJ status report: Brian Burley didn't get 80 finished by Philcon; latest word is "sometime in December". Let us hope....

Richard Delap has also been having problems--he has fallen behind in his prozine reviews, but promises to catch up by year's end. If we're unable to put out SOTWJ, we'll try to make arrangements to have his columns reproduced by offset as they come in, and mailed out with reviews or other oddments, as "emergency" issues of SOTWJ. We'll do the same with ESFA minutes and other important material.

Ad flyer with this issue is from Hyperion Press, Inc. Sounds like a worthy project, and we wish them success.

Thanks to all you who have been letting us know dates of receipt of SOTWJ; no need to continue this any longer, as we now have enough data for development of a statistical picture of how the p.o. treats SOTWJ; will publish results shortly.

-- DLM

ETERNITY SCIENCE FICTION I:2 (undated) (Stephen Gregg, Box 193, Sandy Springs, SC 29677; irregular; offset; 8 1/2" x 11"; tri-color cover; \$1 ea., 4/\$3.50 U.S., 4/\$4.50 elsewhere (\$3.50 in Canada, we should have noted above....); UK Agent: Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, Yorkshire, U.K.; S.African Agent: Nick Shears, 52 Garden Way, Northcliff Ext. 4, Johannesburg, Transvaal, Rep. of South Africa) -- 52 pp., incl. covers; front cover by Ed Romero & D. Anderson; back cover not credited (same artists?); illos by Darrel Anderson, Vincent DiFate, Dany Frolich, Mike Gilbert, C. Lee Healy, Tim Kirk, Doug Lovenstein, Jim McLeod, Edward Romero, William Rotsler, & possibly Mike Archibald (can't find him in 'zine; some of the art credits are incorrect....). Fiction: "Sunchild", by Gustav Hasford; "Islands and Gold", by Arthur Byron Cover; "Sunrise", by Glen Cook; "The Dirty War", by David R. Bunch; "Human Error", by Kris Neville & Barry N. Malzberg; "Castles", by Scott Edelstein; "Nothing Personal", by Grant Carrington; "Splinters", by Robert Wissner. Poetry: "Reflections", by Gene Van Troyer; "Mold Is All We Buffalo Have to Look Forward to", by Scott Edelstein; "Poem", by Darrell Schweitzer; "The Choice", by Neil McAndrew; "Salome Among the Stars", by Peter Dillingham. Features: "The Living Building", by Joe Dacy II (article); Interview with Thomas M. Disch; Graphics by Doug Lovenstein, Michael Stevens, and Jay Kinney; Editorial; Book Reviews by Fred Patten, Jeff Clark, & Stephen Gregg; "Roaches" (reviews of misc. magazines); Record Reviews by Richard & Patricia Lupoff; short autobiographical notes on contributors; lettercolumn. ((Review needed. --ed.))

VERTEX MAGAZINE (Mankind Pub. Co., 8060 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046; ed. by Donald J. Pfeil; bi-monthly; offset; multi-color covers & some colored illos; 8 1/8" x 10 3/4"; \$1.50 ea., 6/\$8, 12/\$14, 24/\$24; add \$1/yr. Canada, \$2/yr. elsewhere) -- **I:4** (Oct. '73): 100 pp., incl. covers; front cover by Josh Kirby, bacover by Tim Kirk; illos by Alicia Austin, Douglas Roy, Monte Rogers, Tim Kirk; cartoons by Bill Rotsler, Grant Canfield. Fiction: "Max", by E. Michael Blake; "The Stars Have All Gone Out", by Alan Brannert; "Synthia", by Tak Hallus; "World War Two", by Geo. Alec Effinger; "Gerald Fitzgerald and the Time Machine", by William Rotsler & Charles E. Burbee; "The Death of Life", by Anthony Lorenti; "A Special Kind of Flower", by Walt Liebscher; "The Missionaries", by Herman Wrede. Articles: "The Biography of a Star", by Igor Bohassian; "Geothermal Power--Mother Nature's Home Remedy", by James Sutherland; "Radio Astronomy Today", by Jay Arrow; "Project Cyclops", by James Benford; "Supercivilizations", by Gregory Benford; "Atlantis: Fact or Myth?", by Jerry Pournelle. Features: "Vertex Interviews Frank Herbert", by Paul C. Turner; Richard Ashby reviews Heinlein's Time Enough for Love; "Moment in History: The Experiment that Failed"; misc. news; Editorial. **## I:5** (Dec. '73): 100 pp., incl. covers; front cover by Kevin Davidson; bacover by Don Davis; illos by Stephan Arnold, C. Lee Healey, Tim Kirk, Alicia Austin, Susan Jenkins, Monte Rogers; cartoons by Bill Rotsler, Grant Canfield, R. Mohr. Fiction: "A Nice Place to Visit", by Stephen Goldin; "I Mind", by Allan Asherman; "Dark, Dark Were the Tunnels", by George R.R. Martin; "For the Good of Society", by Terri E. Pinckard; "Sikh, Sikh, Sikh", by Larry Eisenberg; "Springtime, A.D.", by Richard Ashby; "A'la Mode Knights", by William Rotsler; "No Bands Playing", by Robert A. Heinlein; "The Reason Why", by Steven Utley; "The Questors", by Herman Wrede. Articles: "The Rationalization of Pragmatic Time", by Lawrence Neal; "Aztec Medicine", by Raymond Friday Locke; "Even Relativity Is Relative", by Igor Bohassian; "Life at a Distance", by James Sutherland. Features: "Vertex Roundtable" (Paul Turner interviews Dr.'s Gregory Benson and Sidney Coleman; "Moment in History: Dr. Goddard's Fireworks Machine"; News & short book reviews; "The Art of George Barr", by William Rotsler (George Barr art folio); Editorial.

(("Magazinarama" will appear infrequently, and will cover only those prozines other than the "Big Six" (AMAZING, ANALOG, F&SF, FANTASTIC, GALAXY, & IF), which (or so we are told) everyone gets anyway (at least, everyone who might be interested in a contents listing). On hand for next installment: WEIRD TALES 47:3. --ed.))

(dissecting)

^ THE HEART OF THE MATTER:
Magazines for Aug., 1973

Operational Procedures
Supervised by
Richard Delap

If you read all these magazines just before taking off for Torcon, you might have had second thoughts about whether science fiction is worth such fuss and bother. The few good stories this month are scattered all around, the routine stories pervading, and the really bad ones much too numerous. THE HAUNT OF HORROR expires after only two issues, not enough time to accurately judge its market penetration but no surprise to those who disappointedly discovered its quality was very lowline. F&SF continues to make the best (if weak) showing among the regulars, and VERTEX, after three issues, continues to worsen (a new editor, Lawrence Neal, is credited for this issue, but Pfeil returns with number four).

It seems quite odd that at a time when magazines are fighting for their lives new magazines are launched to buck the competition of the established publications and the proliferating anthologies. And what about the public--does it want quality or just something, anything, to read? It's a question to ponder.

AMAZING STORIES -- August:

Short Novel:

To Walk with Thunder -- Dean McLaughlin.

The horrors of pollution have run the gamut in SF, from terror-filled novels like Brunner's The Sheep Look Up to innumerable short stories of doom. I suppose a reviewer runs the risk of being labelled an alarmist by calling attention to too many such tales, but some of these stories are not only strong propaganda but very good stories within their own right. When air pollution is finally nearing the point of no return, when good men do nothing because they are sealed into ineffectual positions by greedy corporations and power-hungry politicians--this is the setting twenty years hence. One such good man is Tom Brandt, a special environmental advisor to the President, who has foresight and courage but for all his deftness and concern is slowly bricked-up behind a wall of corruption that presents a hypocritically concerned face to the public. Brandt is a fascinating character, a strong man who must fend off a variety of disasters, from an alcoholic wife to political smears, yet he is not allowed to become a mere messianic stereotype. He is the man we all want to be because he is good but not perfect, troubled by his problems, sometimes at a loss to find answers, and never blandly heroic. His day-to-day trials bring a measure of emotional empathy to a story that is obviously a healthy and very critical look at the social/political climate that, if we do not beware, will leave us strangling in our own filth. The measure is nicely balanced and the purpose is well-served. I only hope the rash of similar (and often hysterical) predictions does not cause this fine story to become lost. Very well done.

Short Stories:

The Once and Always War -- Gerard F. Conway.

Six hundred years after the earth has been laid waste by a terrible war between the establishment and the rebels, the latter of which have fled to the Rim, one man finds a rebel ship and its frozen occupants and feels a fascination rather than repulsion for one of the lovely women on board. The war, however, is not ended, and Conway lets this fact twist his story around the reader's assumptions about love and sexual attraction. In the end one feels lost as to what the characters are feeling emotionally, since their actions and motives are not very well clarified and the background too hazily detailed. Fair.

The Wind She Does Fly Wild -- Alpajpuri.

Here's a story that catches the attention from the beginning, holds it tightly for a time, then lets it slip away when the author fails to bring an urgency to

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

the problem he described. He tells of a young woman imprisoned in an asylum, a victim of "tripling" (apparently some sort of mind-destroying drug), who plots her escape with care and precision. Her final act of "insanity", however, only causes the reader to wonder even more at the cause of her hospitalization, a question which is not answered or even presented with much concern. The writing is colorful but without much reason. Fair.

Up Against the Wall -- Robert Thurston.

Thurston's mild spoof of radicalism carries in it the germs of half a dozen SF plays, as a college dean uses a time machine to outfox the plans of a militant student. None of them is used to the story's benefit, sad to say, and they are instead employed for a series of dullish lectures that waltz around the ideas without going anywhere or using them to any effect. I just don't see the point of this exercise and find it quite tiresome.

They Roar -- Clark Cox.

After a fall and concussion, a young man is discovered to have a telepathic ability to hear a "roar" from the brains of others. With his job gone and welfare his only alternative, he accepts the doctor's offer of a job listening for the cessation of roars from dying patients. While Cox is obviously concerned with the tangential moral questions, he's never quite able to pull off the simple mentality of his lead character and his story, despite its strengths, reads like a second-rate "Flowers for Algernon". Fair.

ANALOG -- August:

Serial:

The Far Call (part one) -- Gordon R. Dickson.

Novelettes:

Forty Days and Nights -- Robert Chilson.

Tedi Sorenson, a pretty young woman with a conspicuous talent in both government and bioengineering, finds her loyalty tested in all sorts of troublesome ways in Chilson's contrived and desperate to be "with it" portrait of the near-future. Her talent and friendliness make her a marvelous contact for the Black Star organization (a powerful force which has, according to the author, rather miraculously cleared out the nastier elements of the black ghetto areas); her scientific know-how and personal charm make her a government asset. Tedi's personal life, however, is mostly a shambles, for her husband is radical, unthinking and damnably difficult to admire. Chilson never is able to explain the love between them and takes little interest in examining it, yet the drama of his story hinges on this unlikely love. What emerges is a gross lump of male chauvinism poorly disguised by making the story's heroine the viewpoint character. It is mushy, undisciplined and painful to read, for man or woman. Awful.

The Epoxy Goat -- David Lewis.

Lewis updates the mad-scientist's-invention-gone-berserk story and turns it into a slick and laugh-provoking tour-de-force. The invention is an "automated-mechanical-trash-picker-upper", as the story's narrator dubs this machine which leaves its highway duty and goes rampaging over the countryside "eating" anything in its path. In addition to the bravado Lewis displays in both his humor and descriptive similes, he also works in a very nice and relatively serious comment on human interrelations, when to plant your feet down firmly both in matters of friendship and of love. The story is jolly and lighthearted, but not only jolly and lighthearted, and that's what makes it good.

Short Stories:

Stimulus-Reward Situation -- Gene Fisher.

The native Gangsha people of an idyllic and comfortable planet show little interest in learning the way of humans who seek to bring them advanced civilization. They prefer to eat and sleep, and have no problems at all until a stubborn commissioner decides to shove advancement down their throats. It's a simple idea

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with room for development, room that Fisher discards in a simplistic comicbook plot, stereotype characters, and a decided lack of imagination. Quite bad.

The Sweet Smell of the Past -- Lawrence A. Perkins.

A teacher invents a time machine but after several tests in his basement, and the destruction of one of his wife's favorite teacups (it returns to "now" as a heap of dust), he's ready to conclude that the invention is a practical failure. His dear, sweet little wife has a level head, however, and shows him how his invention can offer a solution to the air pollution problem. And they live happily ever after in this catchpenny fairy tale, ANALOG-style. Very thin.

The Jungle -- Karl Hudgins.

Here's a nasty one about a future where citizens who don't work are provided with lush government dole, where these same bored citizens turn to violent crime (simply to relieve their boredom, it seems), and in retaliation the bureaucracy hires mercenary killers to wipe out those who go to criminal excess. The overall picture is of course quite contrived and lacking the detail to bring conviction, but the situation here is simply an exaggeration to point out political corruption and the lack of social welfare needed to combat such problems. Simplistic and gross, to be sure, but surprisingly readable.

Science:

The Synchronistic Barometer -- Herbie Brennan.

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FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION -- August:

Novelettes:

Peregrina: Alflandia -- Avram Davidson.

This story, which forms the first part of the author's forthcoming and second "Peregrine" novel, displays much of Davidson's literary cleverness that makes his work so well-liked among SF connoisseurs. The fact that its plot is unresolved and obviously part of a larger work is only a minor drawback, for Peregrine's adventures with the King of the Alves are pert, lively, sometimes precious, and aswarm with Swiftian humor and stylized slapstick. Davidson's fantasy-historical world--"a mere patchwork quilt of petty kingdoms", as the King says--is reflected in his characters' speech and logic, ranging from long and humorously improbable speeches to fast and funny one-liners. Whether gauging Davidson's work intellectually or simply as speedy adventure, few should be displeased with it. Good fun.

In the Pines -- Karl Edward Wagner.

I've not tried to hide the fact that I'm very partial to a good horror story, and I'll admit that I sometimes feel kindly disposed towards some tales which make up for minor plots with truly horrific moments. In this case, however, Wagner's "moments" are simply too cliched, lacking the suspense needed to overcome a plot which is strong on mood and short on originality. The characters are typical hackneyed--the man who has come to loathe his crippled wife; the wife whose problems seem not to have added any depth to her boring shallowness; and a vampire-ghost who Wagner insists is both beautiful and sinister but who feels to capture either characteristic very well. The setting, an isolated cabin in a piney Tennessee wood, is well-realized but wasted on a story that fails to realize its potential in terror. Fair.

The Bear Went Over the Mountain -- Sonya Derman.

Roxy Rimidon of the Planet Patrol returns in a new story that at last takes her away from Earth, to the planet Vogl where problems are mounting to a crisis point that threatens to keep the world from developing its primitive resources. The native "insurrectionists" are hostile to Earth's exploitation of Vogl's resources, and the world's own efforts at modernization and scientific experimentation--including a human cyborg that gives Roxy a hard time and becomes a focus for the story's actionful, violent conclusion--fall victim to the revolutionaries who seek to keep Vogl primitive and "pure". Rimidon's personality is better developed in this story than in previous ones, her maturation not yet fully developed but interesting in its progress. While the first half of the tale dawdles and

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

wastes time with needless secondary characters, it picks up steam halfway along and slams through with a fistful of action. Okay of kind.

Short Stories:

Floating -- Dave Skal.

Adjusting to life on a ship among the stars, we already realize, is going to be a large problem for humans who are used to Earth gravity. Skal turns the situation around here and tells of a group acclimated to space who must now re-adjust to gravity, of a man who finds the physical hardships a mere drop in a bucket of psychological difficulties. For all the emotional outpouring, Skal's tale is indistinct, his characters keyed for drama but hardly for human complexity or realism. It's a good try but just doesn't quite reach the standards for good story.

Thinking of the Unthinkable -- Sterling E. Lanier.

A new member to the club convinces the others to bait Brigadier Ffellowes and prove once and for all if the man is a fake or a magnet for "weird events". The bait is the Loch Ness monster, and any reader familiar with Ffellowes will immediately guess that he is not unfamiliar with the beast. The story, as usual, is rather lackadaisical and slim, but the really disappointing thing is that the challenge is neatly sidestepped by ignoring the initial premise the men adapt to trip up Ffellowes. Expected, I suppose, but someday I'd like to see them really nail him down...sigh.

Down and Out -- Ron Goulart.

Some of the major problems with Goulart's zany humor are that it often simply isn't funny but only harried, sometimes covers a do-nothing plot, and occasionally is in very bad taste. All of these defects merge in this revolting story of the future's super-inflation and one man's efforts, in spite of the cost, to do an undercover job for the National Security Office. The conclusion, in which the value of human life decreases with the value of money, could be the author's idea of a serious message, but in context it's like a dirty joke at a church service: offensive. Awful.

The Magic White Horse with His Heart in His Mouth -- Phyllis MacLennan.

The fantasy in this very short story is psychological, and in most instances would hardly even be termed fantasy at all. It is the tale of a young child who is forced to leave her widowed father and her life in a traveling circus to adapt to a "normal" childhood with her aunt--a home, school, the usual childhood surround. The crisis somehow is muted by MacLennan's brevity and the story never really amounts to much. Routine.

Herman -- Graham Petrie.

Herman is a strange hybrid animal, a creature of oddity who becomes the unexpected possession of the story's narrator. At first the man is reluctant to accept the strange beast, suspecting the motives of his friend who leaves the creature; but in the end he finds himself drawn to Herman, lost in the depths of Herman's strange eyes and developing an eerie rapport. Petrie only hints at Herman's origins and talents, but the inexplicitness adds a touch of mystery that makes the suggestedly gruesome conclusion quite effective. Good.

Science:

Constant as the Northern Star -- Isaac Asimov.

THE HAUNT OF HORROR -- August:

Serial:

Conjure Wife [reprint-1953] (conclusion) -- Fritz Leiber.

Novelette:

The Jewel in the Ash -- John K. Diomedes.

Dr. Warm did not perish in that final battle with his evil brother ("The First Step", last issue) but was imprisoned in an amber jewel created by "psychic aura", and now after five years returns to join his friends in their battle against the evil of his brother, Canfield, who also survived in a jewel. Warm and his com-

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

panions gather in New Orleans and spend a number of pages prattling politely and Victorianly (in spite of the 1930's era of the story), while the horrible plans of Canfield progress right under their noses. Diomede's insistence on propriety and orderly mannerisms simply works to make his group seem a gathering of dolts and dullards. The story itself is merely an interim episode for what the author obviously hopes will become a series and/or a novel. Lots of luck, Diomede--I certainly won't buy it.

Short Stories:Devil Night -- Dennis O'Neil.

Missouri, 1918, a small farm community--hardly the setting expected for a story of evil and satanism, you say? O'Neil does a neat job creating the era and place of his story of human sacrifice, in which a group of the town's youngsters become will-less participants; but in the end the story is defeated by a confused approach to religion and by characterizations that fall too far over into stereotype or inexplicable weirdness. The murder of one young girl, the story's highlight, is a lifeless sequence lacking both dramatic power and purpose. Stale stuff. Pelican's Claws -- Arthur Byron Cover.

While Cover's tale of the occult runs thin on plot, like so many of its ilk, it holds a reader tightly in a mood of domestic realism that offers a solid counterpoint to the implied supernatural proceedings. I say "implied" because no overt supernaturalism occurs within the story, only hints at powers and gods unknown with quotes from books and the actions of a couple who seem to hold very strange beliefs in their destiny and the fate of their children. Interpretation is left to the reader--dementia or demons, take your choice. Smoothly written with occasional superb stylistic touches, it's a story that holds the attention. Good of kind. Kilbride -- Ron Goulart.

Goulart's up to his usual comedic tricks again, this time with a story about a second-rate writer who finds fame and fortune after conjuring up a nasty little demon named Kilbride. Like Robert Bloch's work of recent vintage, Goulart is fascinated by concepts of the weary Hollywood production scene. The story opens swiftly and amusingly, but loses steam as the reader realizes that Goulart is not after anything fresh but is once more relying on lively dialogue rejoinders to lift a trite plot. Routine.

Finders Keepers -- Annd McCaffrey.

A young boy with an ability to find lost objects just by thinking of them is an obvious target for the corrupt and scheming when his "talent" becomes known. Not only is this pretty standard fare, but it demands great care and restraint to pull it off dramatically. McCaffrey, unfortunately, is very sloppy--she uses sledgehammer sentiment (the boy's mother is ill and they need money desperately) and black-hat villainy (an insurance investigator tries to force the boy's help in his greed for easy profit), and her story as a result is mawkish and crude.

Neon -- Harlan Ellison.

Strange problems arise in Ellison's story of a man, Roger Charna, who surgeons have turned into a cyborgian freak. Charna cannot meld into the world of "real" freaks, and he continually rejects the messages of love and acceptance that flash at him from the city's neon billboards, fearing it is madness and not love which beckons. The story fluctuates rapidly between Charna's dilemma, which becomes a cruel carnal satire, and the myriad desperate extremes of the supporting characters, at last becoming a blur of idea and artistic excess that is uncomfortable and somehow emotionally numbing. To me it seems very messy and totally out of control--but then, maybe I'm just too lazy to enjoy the pyrotechnics of Ellison's technique. A few may enjoy it, but I think most will react as I did and turn off fast.

Mono No Aware -- Howard Waldrop.

A young Japanese boy, who loses his parents, home and security in the holocaust which levels Hiroshima, grows into a man bent on re-writing the past, aided by a special time-travelling ability imparted to him by the nuclear blast. The plot is sort of old hat, and there is the likelihood that some may interpret it

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a panacea for American guilt; but I think Waldrop is really after something altogether different, and despite the weaknesses the story has a solid emotional impact. Good of kind.

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WORLDS OF IF -- July-August:Serial:

Our Children's Children (conclusion) -- Clifford D. Simak.

Novelettes:

Pearsall's Return -- F.M. Busby.

Back on Earth after an eight-month mission in space, Pearsall discovers the earth isn't home at all but an alternate world in which he and his crewmates must now find their place. The idea is a standard and though Busby tries to make a meaningful comment on a touchy and intense situation, his story is slow and stilted, the characters displaying only scattered moments of true humanity. In the end the situation seems too impossible to work out to satisfaction, and the final revelation is quite obviously a cop-out. There are a few good touches here and there, but all in all the story lacks both the meaning and the method of something of worth and intensity. Fair.

The Invaders -- Stephen Tall.

This one's an unpleasant example of what happens when an author discards known science and good sense for sentiment and melodrama. Here we find a race of aliens who are destroying their ecological system by feeding a giant "mutant crab-being" which has grown to monstrous proportion and at last threatens the lives of the creatures who thoughtlessly comply with its cries for food. The invading Earthmen conveniently land at just the right moment to set things right, a coincidence which wouldn't be nearly so annoying had Tall given the situation some conflict and tension. Instead he proffers simpering simplicity and contrivance, the aliens and Earthmen both too aware of and responsive to developments that grow from the writer's desire and not from the story or characters themselves. A silly, boring story.

Short Stories:

The Meaning of the Word -- Chelsea Quinn Yarbro.

Once more Earthmen are finding artifacts of a long-dead civilization on another world. Peter Jhirinki, a young man who makes the initial discovery, a buried room of hieroglyphics and a translating machine, is compelled to record and decipher the find, against the demands of his fellow explorers and even upon the threat of death by radiation exposure. His determination is dramatic but of itself not enough to excuse the other stereotype characters used to flesh out a slender plot of deteriorating logic. Routine.

Support Your Local Police -- David Magil.

A New York cop should be prepared for just about anything, even a couple of pretty young girls visiting from the future, one of whom is murdered by punks in Central Park, the other determined to "rectify" the problems this has caused. Magil tried very hard to pull this comic caper together, making use of short, blunt sentences so popular in the school of hardboiled detective fiction. The effect never works, however--the humor is strained, silly rather than amusing, and the plot is never more than utter nonsense.

Westwind -- Gene Wolfe.

The grim future, where man ignores directives for conduct that will protect his world from abuse, has become a familiar milieu to the SF reader. Seldom do we get what Wolfe offers here, however--a speculation on a method that will work to keep a reasonable order in such a world, a regard for the little man, his need for a sense of importance, his contribution to the society at large (considered necessary for the sense of giving if not for the gift itself). Wolfe does not delve into the immense network necessary to sustain such a setup, where each person makes a personal report to the country's "ruler", but his brief description

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

shows the reader the use of such a system and convinces him its deception could easily be applied. Very well done.

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VERTEX -- August:

Novelettes:

All the Bridges Rusting -- Larry Niven.

Unused bridges rusting in the weather, fallen into disuse with the discovery of instantaneous matter transmission, are mentioned briefly to parallel a situation that might arise in the next century. A ship, its inhabitants frozen in suspended animation for the trip to Alpha Centauri, launched just before the transmitter discovery and now gone over 30 years, is discovered to be in an unsolvable dilemma. Its destination has already been discovered a useless one, and rescue would involve so much expense that public support of the funds needed will surely never be approved. There's little question that Niven will not leave this crew "falling through space forever"--the question is, how will he rescue them? Niven's answer is a technical/technological one, old-fashionedly introduced as a conclusion which is unworkable as drama, and fails to make use of several characters who initially show spark then are disastrously reduced to mere role-playing. Very disappointing.

Future Perfect -- A.E. van Vogt.

The "perfect" future society given here is a patsy for the disintegration begun by a young man who first breaks the ground rules by spending his lifetime government allotment of one million dollars within nine days of receipt, then step-by-step frustrates all efforts to control his outrageous antics. The difficulty here is the same one which has prevented Van Vogt from ever becoming a good writer--he plots for action and excitement, totally disregards common sense and disrespects logic. His society has controls, both financial and sexual, which are presented as accepted facts, but with no thought given to the society which should (or even could) result and no reference to the difficulties in the enforcement obviously necessary to bring such control into effect. The plot spirals through the usual monstrosities of ineptitude and nonsense, a story for idiot sensibilities and an insult to the SF audience. Poor.

Short Stories:

Experiment -- William Carlson.

Man confronting the puzzles and terrors of the unknown has given SF a remarkable history of illuminating stories of bravery, ingeniousness, and downright cussed determination. Carlson makes use of a well-worn concept--a man and woman find themselves imprisoned in a huge room, their memories only partially intact, their present position unexplained--but he screws the reader by offering shock for its own sake. The result is a vulgar, infuriating story that preys on the reader's sensibilities to no purpose.

Confrontation -- Herman Wrede.

Even without Tim Kirk's illustration which rather unfairly clues the reader in on the story's climax, Wrede's tale of a robot passing for human, after a mass robot revolt has been quelled, doesn't quite have the needed cleverness to bring off its punch. Instead the reader is left only with a tame basic ploy that lacks the characters, color, or misdirection to give it an element of surprise or suspense. Fair.

2000¹ -- A Spaced Oddity -- F.M. Busby.

Busby's parody of Kubrick-Clarke's 2001 is probably going to divide readers into two camps--those who find it amusing (most likely the ones who didn't care for the film) and those who don't. I fall into the latter category, I'm afraid, unable to respond to astronauts named Laurel and Hardy or to monolith messages "in Vegan Script". The problem is that Busby's humor has little (if anything) to do with the original story and is introduced randomly and without direction.

(Over)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --Adamant Eve -- Charles Fritch.

This simplistic, juvenile farce takes Adam and Eve to another planet, reduces Adam to a non-character, and plays up a snickering battle of wisecracks between Eve and the snake. It's a dreary little effort that makes the reader cringe at such lines as "I know my rights, and I won't stand for any snake brutality!" and "the apple might be drugged and when I'm unconscious. . . you'll take all sorts of terrible liberties with my lush young female body." This is humor? Aghhh!

Brave Arms, Strong Arms -- Greg Joy.

Author Joy exploits a fearful theme in a crude and very objectionable manner, told in first-person narrative (a very poor and inconsistent one, I might add) by a simpleminded handyman who helps carry radioactive debris to an ocean dump, the story uses the character to fulfill an offensive stereotype, that of the simpleton who brings disaster through ignorant stubbornness. It takes an author with writing skill to succeed with such a delicate theme, and Joy's clumsiness is both awful and sad. No editor should allow a new writer to publicly fail as miserably as this.

The Victim -- Scott Edelstein.

Here's a short-short, one of those damnably hard things to write, this one about a man who awakens to find he's recovering from being hit by a meteor, seems to be in heaven and---well, I can't tell more except to say that Edelstein carries his tongue-in-cheek in a very straight face. It takes a minute or so to fully sink in, but it's a sharp little item that gets better the longer one thinks about it. Good.

Alas, Poor Tidy Toidy Girl -- Rachel Payes.

Take a not very bright girl named Gwendolyn Winterbottom, a hotel chain that decides to make Gwen its official inspector of other-worldly locations (for example, Outer Muglubia in the Chintzie System), and stir it up in a cutesy-pie fluff of a plot. Such is what Payes has done, and a more nauseating example of infantile humor would be hard to find. If I hadn't seen it in print I'd swear it was unpublishable. Really junk.

Reprint:

Wood of Time -- Norman Spinrad. [from: Alchemy and Academe, edited by Anne McCaffrey, Doubleday, 1970]

Interview:

An Interview with Poul Anderson -- Paul Turner.

Articles:

Weightlessness -- Gregory Benford.The Apollo/Soyuz Mission -- Igor Bohassian.Black Hole Mines in the Asteroid Belt -- Jerry Pournelle.

Art Portfolio:

The Art of Josh Kirby.-----
S. F. MART: Classified Ads

SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY MAGAZINES FOR SALE 1926-1970. No lists available. Send your wants & include SASE. My personal wants for which I'll pay top dollar are--THE THRILL BOOK (all issues); WEIRD TALES (1923 & 1924 issues; 1925: Feb.; 1929: Jan. & Aug.) JOE GOGGIN, 6202 Greeley Blvd., Springfield, VA 22152.

CASTING CHESS SETS. I need someone who can make molds & cast Chess pieces. I have previously had them cast in "Furniture Formula". JOE MAYHEW, 6002 67th Ave. #5, E. Riverdale, MD. 20840.

WANTED: NEW WORLDS #'s 175 & 176; UNKNOWN 7/39. DON MILLER (see pg. 1).

Classified ads are free up to 10 35-character lines for SOTWJ subbers & traders, 2¢/line (minimum 25¢) to others. Pre-prepared flyers are \$1.50/printed side (200 copies needed). No ads in TWJ; no more than one flyer with ea. SOTWJ.