S O N O F T H E W S F A J O U R N A L

WSFA JOURNAL Supplement: Book Review Issue - - - - - - March, 1971 (Issue #17)

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In Brief --

As you can see, this is a 10-page, 1st-class issue rather than the 22-page, 3rd-class offering we announced in SOTWJ-16. SOTWJ is no longer just a "news" supplement--it is now the JOURNAL Supplement, replacing the odd supplements which have been appearing with the last few TWJ's. There will be "news" issues, book review issues (at least one per month for awhile), book review index issues, and others.

James R. Newton is the science-fiction book reviewer for the SUNDAY STAR (Washington newspaper). The reviews listed above which are marked with asterisks originally appeared in the SUNDAY STAR, resp. issues 17 Jan '71, 3 April '70, 17 May '70, 20 Sept '70, and 29 Mar '70; they are reprinted here with permission. They are, of course, copyrighted (c), by The Evening Star Newspaper Company, in the year corresponding to the date of the newspaper.

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--DLN

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% D. Miller
12315 Judson Road
Wheaton, Maryland
U.S.A. 20906

TO:

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

S. F. PARADE: Book Reviews

The Inner Wheel, by Keith Roberts (Doubleday; 207 pp., $4.95).

Science fiction dealing with futuristic trips into space is much easier to write--and makes more casual reading--than tales about the greatest resource on Earth--the human mind. The Inner Wheel deals with the awakening realization by a selected few that they possess telepathic abilities, and how those capabilities affect themselves and the world around them.

Englishman Roberts manages to evoke a sense of realism in writing about the intangibleness of mentalities. And though Inner Wheel doesn't present a new plot, the conviction grows that what you're reading is an after, rather than purely speculative before-the-fact account of the advent of homo superior, the next logical step up the evolutionary ladder.

The realism comes, I think, from the precision with which Roberts builds into each of his characters the amalgamation of reasoned strengths and weaknesses which combine, even in our normal mentalities, to form the spark of divinity distinguishing man from the rest of the animal world.

Yet Elizabeth Maynard, for example (middle section of the tripartite story), displays all the arrogantly cruel naturalness of children as her burgeoning telepathic powers impinge on her environment.

How she mellows is developed with meticulous progression through all the heartbreak, pathos, laughter, pain, pleasure and beautiful sadness that marks transition of all mentalities, regardless of capabilities, from adolescence to adulthood.

The Inner Wheel is a book that makes you think while you enjoy reading it. It's a credit to the science fiction genre. There should be more like it.

-- James R. Newton

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The Power of X, by Arthur Sellings (Berkley Medallion X1801; 60¢).

This is a novel that had difficulty deciding whether or not it wanted to be a farce. The plot presumes to take itself seriously, but this is rendered rather difficult by the fact that one of the principal characters is the hero's Aunt Clarissa, an unreconstructed monarchist with a penchant for the conspiratorial. Auntie Clarissa is a camp figure, galloping through every chapter and puncturing any bubbles of serious intent with her ornate walking stick. Unfortunately, while this little touch is quite sufficient to prevent The Power of X from being taken seriously, it isn't enough to make it humorous. Instead, it sort of stumbles along the median strip, going nowhere in particular. The story is about an art gallery owner named Max Afford, who discovers that he can distinguish by touch objects that have been "plyed"--duplicated identically by some extra-dimensional legerdemain. This talent avails him nothing, until one day he happens to shake hands with the President of the European Federation, and discovers that he isn't the President, but a duplicate. The actual President, it turns out, is being held prisoner in the underground shelter beneath the palace by the cabal of cabinet officials who are manipulating the duplicate. Max, Auntie Clarissa, an ex-senator of the opposition party, Max's lady love and a private detective hired by Auntie manage to figure out the conspiracy, tunnel their way into the presidential palace, and rescue the captive President. Both the President and his duplicate disappear (plying turns out to have a slight drawback...), but the conspiracy is meanwhile unmasked, the ex-senator assumes the burden of executive power and will, we are assured, employ it wisely, and Max gets together

with the broad for whom he's had the hots. Sellings accomplishes all of this in 140 pages, without at any time showing substantial talent in any aspect of the writer's trade.

-- Ted Pauls

The Ends of Time, edited by Robert Silverberg (Hawthorn Books; 225 pp.; $5.95).

The title of this Silverberg-edited anthology is somewhat misleading, for, despite its pristine neatness on the cover, the eight offerings inside are not time stories at all in the time-honored science fiction sense. Instead, they treat the far future, although all the authors--including Silverberg himself--take pains to leave the reader with the feeling that still more future, however bleak, remains. So--more deception--there's really no ends involved either.

Silverberg, in an inevitable introduction, feels bound to declare his assumption that many people read science fiction "in an attempt to pierce the veil of the future", and rationalizes his selections on the basis that the "eight visions of the far reaches of time" will satisfy those erstwhile veil-piercers.

Maybe so, for some. But for me the offerings here include only two with the touch of perennial freshness that bridges the gap between the time of the story's first appearance and now: Poul Anderson's "Epilogue" (1962) and John W. Campbell's "Twilight" (1934), in that order. The other six, stretching from 1951 to 1965, just don't "serve to ease the hunger for knowledge of time's remote reaches...."

Maybe they will for you.

-- James R. Newton

Starwolf #3: World of the Starwolves, by Edmund Hamilton. (Ace G-766; 50¢).

Morgan Chane, the white sheep Starwolf, has hit a slack period in the mercenary business--and has decided to go after the reward offered for the return of the Singing Suns, one of the greatest art-works of the galaxy, which had been stolen and finally sold by the Starwolves. He picks up a few helpers, and, in the guise of a meteor miner, goes to Mruun, the world of thieves. He has a bit of trouble with the Mruuns, but soon solves them with the help of a Paregaric--and soon proceeds to the storm-world Rith, where one of the purchasers of the jewels making up the artwork is the ruler.

Eron, the ruler, tells Chane that all of the parts of the Singing Suns have been acquired by the Qajars, a half-mad race with a love for ornaments, torture, and very deadly weapons. Eron offers information and will split the reward when Chane retrieves the jewels. Unfortunately, Chane blows it, and barely escapes. So Eron holds him, to trade to the Qajars when they start looking for revenge.

Then the fun starts.

Edmund Hamilton has been writing a lot longer than most of us have been breathing. Judging from the Captain Future stories with his name on them, he learned his trade quite early. Unlike many of the older writers, Hamilton's style (in the series at hand anyway) is unstilted, uncumbersome (except when he tries to make Chane explain his motives and moral feelings) and very fast-paced. He describes the Singing Suns, and a strange Asteroid Graveyard that is incidental to the story, with such ability that you can almost feel them. The whole story moves so damned fast that such minor questions as: "Why do authors like to use Q's without putting u's behind them, without saying how to pronounce them?" or, "How can even a Starwolf make a sharp turn in space at what must be near light speed?" But I'm being

pickie, pickie, pickie. What do you want in a space opera, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN?

Recommended. Darn good entertainment for the price.

-- David Halterman

Magellan, by Colin Anderson (Walker & Co.; 189 pp.; $4.95).

This allegorical fantasy treats an old subject: What you have not is more desirable than what you have. It's fallacy, of course, but the population of Magellan, self-contained city-world of the last human survivors of the Great Tribal Atomic War, mindlessly embrace the fallacy, called Liberation, only to find that complete wish-fulfillment creates a guilt-world for the greater majority.

The story of Liberation is told through the eyes of Euri, a rebel in the otherwise self-perpetuating stasis of Magellan. The fulcrum which will lever each individual into his personal paradise is Chronophage, unseen but all-pervasive giant self-generating computer drawing on the unlimited power of the earth's core. It receives thoughts, amplifies crude visualizations, and synthesizes in milliseconds everyone's desires.

Only, Liberation turns out to be the environment each individual himself projects--a chilling reality for most. How many humans are really innocent? Liberation traps in the nightmares of human weaknesses all those too weak of will to make an acceptable reality for themselves. It takes Euri the full 189 pages to resolve his aberrations into a rather disappointing the-future-will-be-better sort of climax.

Reading the unchaptered--(or, if you prefer, single-chaptered) structure of this British novel (printed in the USA from type set in the UK) may seem a vermiculated exercise to those used to the relief of occasional pauses built into more conventional novel formats. Like much of the New Wave writing, Magellan is fairly interesting, but curiously unsatisfying, to wade through.

-- James R. Newton

Subspace Explorers, by E.E. Smith, Ph.D. (Ace Book H-102; 60¢; 251 pp.).

An impressive cover by Schoenherr and a frontispiece somewhat relating to the story by Roy Krenkel.

Almost, one could believe that SE was the synopsis for a vast project on the scale of the Lensman stories. Doc Smith has stacked up a huge cargo of ideas, including an updated and plausible version of arenak (a tungsten, rhenium, etc. alloy heat-treated to grow tungsten whiskers), and some splendid double-talk about psionics. Also included are some incredibly simplistic ideas about Capital and Labor, and some ideas about Communism which predate the Skylark of Space (Monolithic, unchanging, Boskonian to the fingertips).

However, "Doc" Smith is aware of his shortcomings, and while his heroes are smashing the toughest (corrupt) union on Tellus, the point is made that the Galaxians also have tough (honest) unions, to offset their noble (honest) capitalists.

And they go through picket lines with tanks and machine guns, but of course, the picket line is all union goons/labor shock troops who are armed to the teeth.

The stable dollar is achieved, and gigantic corporations, in defiance of today's conventional wisdom, pay for everything cash on the line. (Well, if you borrow money at 6%, the interest is tax-deductable, and inflation eases the pain of repaying the principal. But with a stable dollar, and no taxes now....) Also, just imagine

that GE and GM and Dupont and all the Standard Oil Companies have gone out and established their own planets.

Smith's idea of something ten times the size of GM owned in fee simple by a family (who don't pay inheritance taxes because they are also the government of the planet) is an updated version of the princes and princesses of Mars, Venus and Elsewhere.

It is notable that while he is contemptuous of bureaucracy, he implicitly makes use of it. Yes, a supergenious is running the superproject, but somebody is keeping the time sheets and making out the payroll checks. When visible, as on corrupt Tellus, the bureaucracy collects its lumps.

Smith is also, in a way, a realist. Despite the brags of his supertrust, "We could fight a war out of petty cash", the first time they meet an enemy in their own weight class, they find themselves outnumbered and (except for psionics) outgunned. Going back to the days of Nelson, the psionic admiral stands on the bridge and watches the englobing fleet approach from hyperspace. With the unamplified power of his mind's eye...like--NO INSTRUMENTS! "Run, you fools!" he yells.

In his attitude towards sex Smith is also distinctly at variance from his earlier work. Here, in the first ten pages we find familiar ingredients: the luxury space liner, the tough, virile, virtuous hero, the beautiful, nubile heiress to great wealth, the mysterious disaster. The difference is that by the time we get to the mysterious disaster, TVVH and BNHTGW have been married for seven pages already!

Smith is also aware that the worldview he expresses in the story is subject to less cheerful faces than the one he puts on it. Hence we have an acknowledgment of the adverse viewpoint (probably the reason ANALOG didn't run the story) and a fairly extended discussion of ethics.

Then we have a wonderful side trip to Ponsonby's world, in which everybody wears a recorder which monitors conversation, and everybody gets reviewed once a week (by computer, I hope). Smith was having fun, because Ponsonby is clearly the Apotheosis of Capital. The Company giveth and The Company taketh away...blessed be the Name of the Company.

Anyway, the "mals", people with big mouths, get zapped and that is the end of it. No unions here.

There are also a lot of loose ends left around. For instance: Adams, the transcendent supergenius, comes up with a list of 18 coincidences and deduces the presence of an operator (the author?). We never go beyond that one hint of Arisia. Just the hint. Or again, the children of super-psionic parents show twitches and flurgs of truly stupendous incipience, but the book ends before they ever make their entrance. The Communists have psionists too. And so forth.

The book is fun to read, and if it falls a bit short of the pounding excitement of Grey Lensman, without achieving the stylistic elegance of Zelazny (a lot of it reads like first-draft, which it might have been), why it adheres to the values of an earlier era.

-- Alexis Gilliland

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Anywhen, by James Blish (collection) (Doubleday & Co.; 168 pp.; $4.95).

Say "James Blish" to any older science fiction buff and he'll likely respond with "Cities in Flight", the impeccably-drawn and utterly fascinating four-volume series about stellar mobile urbanity.

Say "James Blish" to the younger s-f fan set and the response might easily be "Star Trek", referring to the novelized versions Blish did of three episodes of TV's first eminently successful broadcasts of serious science fiction (successful but ultimately a victim of that always fatal disease, Boobtoob Ratingitis).

In either case, sure to be implicit in these reactions is an appreciation of the Blish quality, which is also unmistakably prevalent throughout the seven outstanding tales included in Anywhen. Blish has a talent for bringing out the compelling fascination of humanity caught in unearthly situations and for creating believability through understatement. These rare abilities produce jewel-bright vignettes whose brilliant clarity persists even when emotions depicted include despair, dread or horror.

Like "How Beautiful With Banners", in which a dedicated woman scientist succombs to an unforeseeable interaction between old and new life. A hostile environment does her in, but, under Blish's facile pen, without the dark mood-language that marks so many death scenes.

Or like "A Dusk of Idols", in which the most meaningful action takes place in the Grand Sewer of Chandala. Yet Blish's use of a septic locale for regeneration of a man's soul is lucidly realistic without the necessity of splashing any of the corruption on the reader.

Blish is good anytime and prove it all over again in Anywhen.

-- James R. Newton

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Analog 7, edited by John W. Campbell (Belmont B95-2032; 95¢).

People who have been reading science fiction for any appreciable length of time (a category into which we may safely assume most of TWJ's readers fit) will be sufficiently familiar with the type of SF featured in ANALOG, and with the annual anthology series of the same name, that no extended discussion of the nature and general orientation of the volume should be necessary. Suffice it to say that this seventh ANALOG anthology is rather characteristic--of the magazine, the editor and the series: 340 pages of fiction, all resolutely conventional (as opposed to "New Wave", however defined), maintaining a standard of careful professionalism, and distinguished by several outcroppings of gleaming excellence.

There are two genuine winners in this anthology. One is Anne McCaffrey's "Weyr Search", a rich, beautiful, moving novella in the "feudal world" school of SF. This is McCaffrey at her finest, weaving a sensitively-textured tapestry of drama and nobility. The other is "The Last Command", by Keith Laumer. Laumer is a writer whom I am gradually reassessing, having had some harsh things to say about him in the past. I consider his Retief stories to be practically the pinnacle of a particular fashion of facile hackwork, and had little respect for Keith Laumer as a writer until recently. In the past year or so, however, he has written some commendable fiction, and "The Last Command" is one example. It is an extremely well-done and sensitive story about an ancient war machine run amuck and the aged veteran who brings it under control. It contains no surprises beyond the first few pages--that "Grandpa" will save the situation and die in the effort is obvious from the moment the old man appears in the narrative--but it is done so bloody well that its predictability doesn't matter.

The remaining nine selections are on a somewhat lower plane, though none is a less-than-satisfactory story. "Aim for the Heel", by John T. Phillifent, is a clever piece about a professional assassin with a deep aversion to physical violence of any kind. He accomplishes his ends by trickery and suggestion, and as usual with such stories a bit too much depends upon the stupidity of the victims. Equally clever is Mack Reynolds' "Fiesta Brava", another of his Section G stories. It isn't to be taken seriously for a moment; but the situation and the characters are fun, there are a couple of beautiful bits of comedy "business", and it all adds up to an entertaining light-weight novella. "Free Vacation", by W. Macfarlane, is an odd piece of fiction, quite good in places, somewhat loose at the end, and "The Featherbedders", by Frank Herbert, is yet another variation on the alien-shape-changers-come-to-Earth theme, which is both interesting and

nicely done. "Lost Calling", by Verge Foray, is a rather bland typical ANALOG story. Even more typical of the magazine is Mike Hodous' "Dead End", a problem story in which the customary position of humans and aliens in tales of this type is reversed. Hodous does a smooth, clever job of employing a very familiar device. "There Is A Crooked Man", by Jack Wodhams, is an interesting series of rapid-fire vignettes in the theme of crime and technology in the future. It contains some marvellous ideas; indeed, it uses up about four novels ' worth of ideas, for which other writers may be cursing Mr. Wodhams roundly. Fascinating ideas are also the forte of Bob Shaw's "Burden of Proof", which examines the applications to crime prevention and jurisprudence of Shaw's strikingly original SF invention, slow glass. Finally, there is the most typical ANALOG story of all, Poul Anderson's "Elementary Mistake", in which an exploration party of Terrans improvises like mad to solve technological problems. Anderson does his thing with skillful professionalism, as always.

Pick up Analog 7 even if you don't generally care for ANALOG-type science fiction; most of these stories are worth reading by any SF fan's standards.

-- Ted Pauls

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Tau Zero, by Poul Anderson (Doubleday & Co.; 208 pp.).

This book is genuine science-fiction. It incorporates the most lucid explanation, for a layman, of Einsteinian relativity as applied to an interstellar object (in this case, the Leonora Christine, an interstellar colonizing spaceship) accelerating ever closer to, but never quite reaching, the cosmic limiting factor, the speed of light. Tau zero is the theoretical point at which there is no difference between the object's and light's speed.

Too technical? Don't you believe it! Anderson has woven the superbly human characterizations of 25 couples around the science in this fiction. The stresses are fantastic as the humans find their ship's deceleration capability destroyed and they flash on toward an ultimate speed where time is compressed so greatly that for each second of their ship time the galaxy they left--and the earth--ages thousands of years.

Tau Zero is an epic tale, fantastic yet believable, as only Anderson and a handful of other s-f greats can spin. It's a superlative example of the blending process that produced truly outstanding science-fiction.

-- James R. Newton

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the preserving machine
philip k dick
ace books book club edition

i think that
philip k dick
is a reincarnated
scorpion
when you think
youve got the head straight
the tail stabs you in the ass
his stories
come to a truly
beautiful
ending
and then make a
u turn
to the west of never
his novels
are weird enough
but his short stories
are condensed
schizophrenia
this book
has fifteen stories
all good
some very good
and i have
the galloping jeebies
i feel
as nutty as a bedbug
but im not a bedbug
im yngvi the cockroach
who is not a louse

-- yngvi

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Counterparts, a tale of multi-identity, by Tom Baum (The Dial Press; 127 pp.; $4.95).

This is a dirty book. I'm no prude; four-letter words don't shock me. When used for a legitimate purpose, which is made clear to the reader, they can strengthen a specific characterization, reflect the reality of a not-all-sweetness-and-light-world, or add contrapuntal shadowing to accentuate story highlights.

But dirt without worth or purpose is filth, no matter what container you package it in or what mellifluous label you apply.

In this case, the goods are soiled. And that's too bad, for the simultaneous worlds storyline, while not new, can make an excellent science fiction framework when properly handled. Unfortunately, Baum has cluttered his story with gobs of salacious verbiage. And even if you can stomach his overweening concentration on the genitals, you won't find any real resolution of the most intriguing question he poses: If you meet and copulate with a female counterpart of yourself in another dimension, should you enjoy the experience?

It's obvious Baum enjoyed the narcissistic effort of writing about it. What that makes him only his psychiatrist knows. What it--and other equally scrofulous dribblings--makes is a dirty book I'm a little ashamed to class as science fiction.

-- James R. Newton

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Quest for the Future, by A.E. Van Vogt (Ace 69700; 253 pp.; 95¢).

This "new" novel is actually a typical welding job of old stories plus some new material. Now to engage in some detective work. The Prologue and Epilogue are from the end section of "Film Library" (ASF July 1946). The first three chapters (except for the last two pages of the third chapter) are also from "Film Library", and so are pages 222-224 in a slightly altered form--which means that all of "Film Library" except a very small section is used. Pages 34-77 are "The Search" (ASF Jan 1943), with only slight additions. At this point we have some new material leading up to "Far Centaurus" (ASF Jan 1944), which he employs for pages 100-122. Here he breaks off with some more new material concerning the same characters and others until pages 212-217, where he gives the end section of "Far Centaurus".

As for the book as a whole: Its only virtue is that it's fast-paced. What Van Vogt has tried to do is give us an expanded novel-length story of the Palace of Immortality. His use of "Film Library" is merely a vehicle to get his hero into the story--that is, it gives Peter Caxton his quest, which he pursues throughout the story. Right here things have already become muddled. At first Caxton is looking for the source of the novelty films which caused his troubles. Later the films are forgotten and it seems that the projector in some vague way is connected with it. When Caxton learns of the Palace of Immortality and of the Possessors, his quest suddenly becomes one of gaining immortality for himself, and then later changes again to that of becoming a Possessor himself. There are a few loose ends, and as far as I can see at least one outright contradiction. The contradiction arises because Van Vogt altered the section of "Film Library" where Caxton dismantled the projector. Later he uses another section of "Film Library" which refers to the dismantling of the projector, which in this book never occurred. There is one sequence when Caxton is trapped in the far future at a time when the universe is coming to an end in some unexplained way. Caxton gets out of that one, but it's never very well explained how. Also, the maneuverings of Kameel Bustaman are rather vague and unmotivated. And the connection between the novelty films and the rest of the story is never explained. As I've said, they served merely to get the story rolling, and once they had done their job Van Vogt discarded them without explanation.

"The Search" and "Far Centaurus" were great stories by themselves, and I suggest that the reader read them instead of this rehash of old material.

-- Mike Shoemaker

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First Flights to the Moon, exegetically edited by Hal Clement (Doubleday & Co.; 217 pp.; $4.95).

This well-done volume points out the tremendous difference between understanding the principles of space flight and the craftsmanship necessary to translate principles into the kind of hardware that finally has taken man to the moon. Twelve stories, written between 1937 and 1967, showcase the diverse ways ten s-f authors (Asimov and Chandler are represented by a pair each) foresaw the first flight to the moon.

For readers who watched the real-time first lunar landing, the stories included here may seem laughably passe. But Mr. Clement has woven a fabric of comparative alanysis--from an introduction that explains why Jules Verne and H.G. Wells are not included, through comments between each tale, to a concisely analytical wrap-up--which neatly ties the presented worlds of imagination firmly and logically to the world of now. Time de-emphasizes errors of detail. It is the authors' general prognosticative elan vital which makes science fiction, like other forms of prophecy, never perfectly right, sometimes wildly wrong, but always basically a human reflection.

Hal Clement has done a better-than-average job of gathering together what could have been deadly dull ingredients and tossing them expertly into a very tasty salad indeed. I recommend it.

-- James R. Newton

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Timepiece, by Brian N. Ball (Ballantine 01903; 75¢).

This is a dull, over-long, eminently forgettable novel which promised much better in its opening chapters but failed to deliver. It begins with a potentially fine idea: a world of leisure in the far future whose principal industry is entertainment, through the detailed recreation of historical worlds in which patrons enjoy adventures under the guidance of Programmers and Plot Directors, and the resultant stories are recorded and broadcast for the vicarious enjoyment of the public at large. The novel's central character, Jordan Delvaney, is a sort of troubleshooter whose task it is to see that the bumbling patrons do not seriously alter the plots and (secondarily) try to prevent them from getting themselves killed.

It has possibilities. Unfortunately, the last time at which this idea plays any part whatsoever in the story is on page eighteen! Thereafter, Timepiece becomes a wholly different novel, involving an expedition to a planet with peculiar properties located at the edge of the galaxy. The expedition is an infinitely boring charade undertaken by the five wooden puppets that are Ball's characters. The writing is indifferent, the pacing far too slow, the science only a little less silly than the mysticism, the background--like the characters--completely unbelievable. The last 135 pages of Timepiece are without saving grace. It isn't even interesting in its inanity, like a good old E.C. Tubb potboiler; it's just bloody dull.

-- Ted Pauls

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Best SF: 1969, edited by Harry Harrison & Brian W. Aldiss (G.P. Putnam's Sons; 243 pp.; $5.95).

I can't argue with the "best" part of this title. With Harrison surveying this side of the Atlantic and Aldiss scouting the British publishing scene, the

sixteen selections are excellent representations, I think, of 1969's s-f output. It was a bumper year.

Authors included range from firmly-established writers like Frederik Pohl and Philip K. Dick to newcomers like ecologist Paul Ehrlich and Jon Hartridge. A Harrison foreword and an Aldiss afterword synopsize the year's science-fiction landmarks.

Sources for these stories provide more than one surprise. Besides the familiar s-f magazines, selections came from such unexpected publications as RAMPARTS, THE HUDSON REVIEW, PLAYBOY and PUNCH.

All in all, this is an entertaining and well-rounded sampling of the world of science fiction in 1969. I recommend it.

-- James R. Newton

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Secret of the Sunless World, by Carroll M. Capps (C.C. MacApp) (Dell #7663; 50¢; cover by Berkey).

I like to see Dell books becoming more involved in SF; the more the merrier, in my opinion. The signs become a little ominous, however, when someone on their staff can't keep the author's name straight. I can expect such goings-on as printing different names on the cover and title page, from those people who put out such books as Sex '99; but Dell? Maybe they just don't give a damn.

I wish I could say that the story makes up for it. C.C. MacApp has appeared in ANALOG and elsewhere--and has heretofore given a good account of himself. This is definitely not one of his high points.

Colonel Vince Cullow of the Space Force goes to Shann (I smelled the pun coming almost immediately, but it didn't.) to be cured of some mysterious disease. He becomes involved with a treasure mountain, space pirates, space war, and the Ancient Ones, the Lenj, who had established a great interstellar empire, only to disappear after a mighty conflict. With those elements, the story is almost inevitable; so I will spare you. It leaves one with the feeling that Edmund Hamilton wrote it in the thirties. It seems trite, unoriginal, unimaginative, and little more than a rehash of ideas that have passed this way before.

The book is adequate for whiling away an idle hour, if no strain on the cerebral faculties is desired. And it is cheaper than a Hollywood movie. Otherwise, forget it.

Rating: D.

-- David Halterman

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World's Best Science Fiction: Reissue of a four-book series of anthologies edited by Donald A. Wollheim & Terry Carr. (Ace Books paperbacks. First series (1965) 288 pp.; second series (1966) 297 pp.; third series (1967) 285 pp.; fourth series (1968) 319 pp. 95¢ each).

The authors represented in these top-notch volumes read like an A-B-C, literally, of a science-fiction Who's Who, from Christopher Anvil's "Bill for Delivery" to Roger Zelazny's "The Man Who Loved the Faioli", with practically every "big" s-f great in between: Aldiss, Asimov, Brunner, Clarke, Davidson, Dick, Disch, Goulart, Lafferty, Leiber, Moorcock, Niven, Pohl, Silverberg, Simak--and that's only a partial listing!

This is heady stuff by the best for those who like to read of other worlds and other futures, robots and computers, invisibility and immortality, and the virtually unlimited possibilities to be found in classic speculative fiction.

-- James R. Newton

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