

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

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(dissecting)
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Operational Procedures
Supervised by
Richard Delap

More and more the magazines are reflecting a growing concern in this country about the problems of pollution and overpopulation, yet somehow this reflection smacks loudly of opportunism and sales strategy. Years ago sf writers were dealing with these problems with care and honest concern (sometimes), and hardly any of the top writers in this market has not dealt with probable resulting horrors at some time or another. Today, however, these horrors have become such a familiar hobbyhorse in the popular press that new writers are taking them for granted and churning out endless variations on simple daily survival in such a world. There is little extrapolation in a positive direction, and most efforts fall into the doomsday or coming-doomsday mode. Worse yet, the stories remain reworkings of the same clichés that have marred the majority of pulp fiction for decades, with little thought given to new developing problems and answers, though new problems (but few answers) are appearing daily.

Sense of Wonder? It still appears now and then in novels like Larry Niven's cheaply-plotted but wonder-full Ringworld, but the magazines seem to want stories dealing with Now--give the reader something with which he can Relate! And don't make it too thoughtful or futuristic, make it Now, make it Relate!

No, Sense of Wonder isn't dead; the market for it has just been temporarily closed by editors who want to Relate, Now! (*sigh*)

Magazines for JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1971

AMAZING STORIES and FANTASTIC:

Ted White's editorials are becoming as much a feature as JWC is to ANALOG, and though I prefer Ted's casual, thoughts-off-the-top-of-my-head approach, there is a tendency to skim much of his material as facile, shallow, lightweight doodling. On the other hand, the monthly features seem to be steadily improving, urging the reader to come back to the following issue for more: Alexei Panshin's engaging sf theorizing, Benford/Book's easy science, good book reviews, and John Berry's dishonest but popular fan reviews. All this does much to make up for another two months of disappointing fiction, but is it enough? How much of it will last beyond eight weeks newsstand space? Very little, I'm afraid, very little....

AMAZING STORIES -- JANUARY:

Serial:

One Million Tomorrows (conclusion) -- Bob Shaw.

Novelette:

Almost Human -- J. T. McIntosh.

In a deep-space observatory a human and an android patter back and forth to familiarize the reader with the human/android prejudices current at this future date. Their beliefs are tested when instructed to detain or destroy a young woman fleeing a murder charge, her fate dependent on whether or not she is human. The story is really too casual for its content, and McIntosh's dreary dialogue is of little help. Routine.

Short Stories:

Soul Affrighted -- Howard L. Myers.

Desperate for something to keep his mind off his sensual, wandering wife, a man uses "dark technology" to make a machine that can show him reality--in this case a bunch of boxes made to hold souls and at the moment sadly depleted due to excess population. I guess this is a fling at sophisticated philosophy, but really....

The Volunteer -- Allen Rivers.

The author sees a probable cause for future ghetto-izing in this short sermon on a horror resulting from overpopulation. But the final punch is one of sf's most familiar, so his story cannot move beyond its basic triteness.

Reprint:

The Sun Doom (1942) -- Stanton A. Coblentz.

Science:

The Road to HAL -- Greg Benford & David Book.

FANTASTIC -- FEBRUARY:

Serial:

The Shapo Changer (conclusion) -- Keith Laumer.

Short Stories:

Bowerbird -- Verge Foray.

Some unique and priceless space diamonds are stolen from the National Space Museum, so the government is forced to hire the services of the obnoxious (as the author calls him) Otto Hoffmann, a hateful but brilliant detective. Most of Hoffman's conclusions are implausible guesswork, and the contrived mystery isn't nearly as interesting as are the sharply-etched characters. This could have been much better.

A Soul Song to the Sad, Silly, Soaring Sixties -- Barry N. Malzberg.

The title accurately describes this fictionalized non-fiction and mirrors the author's obvious concern with a cumulative aftereffect. But somehow, despite this concern, the story still reads as if it were written by an auteur computer. A curiosity, little more.

Nancy -- David Redd.

It is Mr. Redd's superb sense of mood and his clear, crisp style which add a minor interest to this otherwise dull story of the results of atomic war, complete with mutant children and a struggle to replace the lost with something better. The plot is stale and woven of pointless ambiguity, so that all Redd's good effects are pretty much of a waste.

How Eliot Met Jeanie -- Laurence Littenberg.

Two students meet and fall in love on a future campus where sadism, human sacrifice and an odd apathy towards disaster prompt the two to repeatedly note that "something is wrong". And when the author substitutes a cheap and easy cop-out for irony, I must agree. Something is most certainly wrong....

Reprint:

The Magic Flute (1942) -- David V. Reed.

Article:

Science Fiction in Dimension: The Nature of Creative Fantasy -- Alexei Panshin.

ANALOG:

Another year begins and Campbell's rut grooves into Grand Canyon proportions. Imagine that! Who woulda thunk it? Ah, well, one longs to indulge in outrageous fantasies and imagine that some fair day the entire crew behind this sterile rag will go completely ~~insane~~ and start buying stories reflecting humanity's memorable qualities (not just JWC's limited ideas of such). Miller continues to write kind but seldom condescending book reviews, Robert Richardson has some questions about the stars, and even JWC has a sound idea buried in his February editorial--and if we try very, very hard we can almost ignore his faulty examples of common sense. What I want, however, is better fiction; how about you?

JANUARY:Serial:

The Tactics of Mistake (conclusion) -- Gordon R. Dickson.

Novelettes:

The Telzey Toy -- James H. Schmitz.

Schmitz continues his series about the psi-talented beauty, Telzey, and though this story brings in enough propositions to string into still more followups, it's the weakest and silliest yet. The plot is lodged carelessly into the "mad scientist" syndrome, in which Telzey acquires a puppet double, Gaziel, with whom she works to outwit the double's insane creator and his thoroughly nasty assistant. Telzey is fun, but even she can't survive idiot plots like this--watch it, Schmitz, your desperation is showing!

Sprog -- Jack Wodhams.

Another variation of predicting-the-future, this one has a freaky little man named Johan Sebastian Schmidt (!) and a machine which registers coming events to a fine and accurate point. The main problem with the story is that it is depressingly familiar, with Wodhams' humor weighing in on the hard and heavy side of a tale that simply refuses to get up and go. Mediocre.

Short Stories:

Homage -- Tak Hallus.

Technically and dramatically sloppy, this tale of a man returning to Earth after years on another world attempts to gain reader sympathy with a very obvious psychological gimmick. It's merely insulting: blah!

The Enemy -- M. R. Anver.

When an alien awakens amid a pile of human corpses, he has a tough time convincing the newly-arrived humans that he is not responsible for the slaughter. Anver makes the search for the key to this mystery a puzzle directed at the simpleminded. Workaday stuff.

Science:

The Scientific Gap in Law Enforcement -- James Vandiver.

FEBRUARY:Serial:

The World Menders (part one) -- Lloyd Biggle, Jr.

Novelette:

Polywater Doodle -- Howard L. Myers.

Abandoned by his criminal companions, master-crook Omar Olivine inadvertently creates a polywater "creature" which gains energy from warmth and has just enough intelligence to seek out heat sources. It comes in handy, too, when the Patrol recaptures Omar for return to prison, and he trains his pet to be an escape tool. Myers keeps his comedy of contrivances jumping through lively and pleasingly shifting hoops in a story that could easily turn into a silly but lighthearted series. Pleasant fun.

Short Stories:

Wrong Attitude -- Joseph Green.

An interstellar expedition from Earth finds the first proof of alien life by discovering a wrecked ship on a small planetoid, then puzzling over the sci-

ence of the ship's power source. The title ties in with the idea that a little ignorance may be helpful--but not helpful enough to make this effort very interesting. Fair.

The Claw and the Clock -- Christopher Anvil.

A planet of religious pacifists is threatened by marauding alien lobsters, but their efforts to prevent attack are doomed and they must make use of the ace up their sleeve. The lobsters are cartoons, the humans not much better, and Anvil cannot avoid concluding his moronic plot in a tangle of contrivance. The Pickle Barrel -- Jack Wodhams.

"Pollution" is the key word here, not of Earth but rather the interior of a spacecraft making a long fly-round of Mars. The men fall ill as water, air and supplies are cycled and recycled until they are as thin as the author's message-with-a-funny-hat. Mediocre.

Science:

Ptolemy's Red Sirius -- Robert S. Richardson.

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FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION:

Again some fairly well-rounded issues for F&SF, with the February contents page once more sporting the tag: "Including Venture Science Fiction", which I suppose is the official way of announcing that VENTURE really is dead...for another 10 or 15 years? Asimov works up more than a little enthusiasm for those crazy gaseous elements, Baird Searles discusses films a little too briefly for my taste, and James Blish and (yum!) Joanna Russ puzzle over the new books. F&SF remains a fine showcase for both familiar and newer sf talents, and I continue to be very satisfied with its generally high standards.

JANUARY:

Novelettes:

The Human Operators -- Harlan Ellison & A. E. van Vogt.

"...it seems not at all to have included that which we do miserably", says Ellison of this collaborative effort which views a future universe roamed by intelligent starships, each housing a human prisoner who maintains repairs and lives in fear of the ship's cruel punishment for disobedience. I do not think the story displays either author to advantage, however, and is merely a mediocre, misbalanced and negligible page-filler.

Seeker for Still Life -- Gordon Eklund.

Here is an ambitious but almost totally unsuccessful try at fleshing out a standard sf plot with depthful characterization. It tells of a family split by both time and culture, a search for a missing son (who's been conditioned to an alien way of life), a gestalt "hive" mind which foresees the future, and, finally, a father whose search through his own mind for self-understanding punctuates his search for the unknown and mysterious aliens. Slow, windy, and pretentious, the whole effort is unrelenting tedium.

Short Stories:

Mr. Krisky's Cross -- Michael Gillgannon.

Mr. Krisky is an unhappy man: unemployed, hounded by a nagging wife, seemingly ill-equipped to deal with everyday reality. Reduced to "washing his wife's panties", he stumbles into an odd library which offers an answer couched in terms of self-realization. Familiar, yes, but with a tasteful blend of humor and pathos. Good.

Heathen God -- George Zebrowski.

"Religious" sf is no longer so rare, but non-pandering stories are still hard to find. All the more refreshing then is this thoughtful, touching experience of men confronting their "creator"--a small, gnome-like creature imprisoned on Antares IV. I don't personally agree with the sentiments expressed herein, but I am emphatically impressed with the humanity of Zebrowski's imagining.

Spring and the Green-Eyed Girl -- Doris Pitkin Buck.

The editor's blurb tags this an "alternate universe theme". I don't think that's exactly right, but perhaps it is as close as can be said to explain this bittersweet tale of a man, bored by a family reunion, who steps into a hallway to the past and gains an unexpected perspective. Nice.

Matchmaker, Matchmaker -- Leonard Tushnet.

A Jewish love story with a small sf twist, Tushnet's tale of a young and anxious couple determined to marry off an older sister (so their own wedding can take place) is slight, transparent and less funny than was probably intended. Fair.

Specialization -- Gary Jennings.

The trouble with Jennings' lively exorcism jaunt (in a preciously haunted west England castle) is that with all the bubbling humor and two amusing stereotype characters, the story carries a sting in its tail that rattles so loudly that only a very deaf reader could fail to foresee it. Too bad.

Verse:

Winter City -- Sonya Dorman.

Science:

Hot Water -- Isaac Asimov.

FEBRUARY:

Serial:

The Faceless Man (part one) -- Jack Vance.

Short Stories:

Repeat Performance -- Bob Shaw.

This is the kind of incredibly silly story that makes one long for the "good old days" when writers like Brown or Kuttner might have barely squeaked it by with enough logic and/or humor to make it almost work. Shaw's movie theatre that seems to give birth to doppelgangers is so littered with careless, impossible detail that it only succeeds in being ludicrous.

The Beginning of April or the End of March -- Thomas M. Disch.

It's said that familiarity breeds contempt, but I think no intelligent reader could remain contemptuous when confronted with Disch's blisteringly acid, trenchant look at the familiarity of the indefinite--a day in the life of an ordinary man with an ordinary job and ordinary family, seen without trimmings as something extraordinarily frightening. Very good.

A Different Drummer -- Raylyn Moore.

Earnestine Coltharp, founder of the Coltharp Free Children's Center--a rather radical (to put it mildly) preschool educational institution--relates to what lengths she went to found her school (shocking!), what effort went into maintaining it (unswervable!), and what results were forthcoming when she formed a decidedly freaky attachment to a young and brilliant student (unbelievable!). Possibly a blistering comment on social/sexual perversion, probably something more, Miss Moore's observations are startlingly suggestive and screamingly funny. Don't miss this one!

The Fortunes of Popowcer -- Ray Russell.

Four adventures of the incredible Popowcer--well, almost four; actually the beginnings of four stories, just enough to whet your appetite for more of the same, which is part of Russell's built-in comment on plactic imagination/satisfaction. Amusing.

Sam -- Leo P. Kelley.

Father Matthew is slow to catch on that Sam always seems to be in the middle of arguments, brawls and trouble in his small town, so slow that only the drama of death lets him total the numerous clues he's previously ignored. Kelley sadly lets his story strangle between comedy and drama, while the thin plot never bridges the gap.

Verse:

Vampires -- Lawrence Raab.

Science:

Cold Water -- Isaac Asimov.

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GALAXY:

GALAXY seemed to become a bit more selective with its stories during the past year, expanding its range to include almost as wide a range of styles and subjects as sf has the potential to include. I assume this is a showing of editor Jakobs-son's efforts to keep up with a readership that isn't nearly as juvenile as was once supposed. This year starts off with a good issue--though the February issue takes a momentary nosedive--while GALAXY continues to depend on fiction and limits its features to Budrys' readable book column and an occasional special article. New writers are popping up all over the place, many of them with aspiring but slipshod faanish efforts, but a few displaying that spark of real talent. This magazine is climbing back up fast.

JANUARY:

Serial:

Exiled from Earth (part one) -- Ben Bova.

Novelettes:

Too Many People -- H. H. Hollis.

Hollis tackles the dilemma of overpopulation with gusto, good humor laced heavily with good pessimism, and a wonderful set of characters who give this icy tour de force a believability that most "idea" stories lack. The anti-birth infection which will sterilize the world (but giving the scientists a choice for deciding who will then be saved for breeding) is scientifically plausible, and the dramatic structure of the intense research and sudden success is free of the usual woodenness. Very good.

Snow Princess -- Michael G. Coney.

Two new characters are added to the cast introduced in "Discover a Latent Moses" (GALAXY, April 1970), depicting a struggle for survival in a new Ice Age. Aside from the cannibalistic flesh eaters, the group must now contend with intelligent bears and even more imminent starvation. There are still more questions than answers, but this story is better paced than the first and holds interest.

What You Know -- A. Bertram Chandler.

Lieutenant Grimes has problems...once again. The most pressing one is a proud and cold woman, the influential Commissioner Dalwood, who turns Grimes' ship into a tightly-ordered, neatly-run and very unhappy vessel. As easygoing as ever, this series' latest entry has a little more bounce than others of its ilk. Ok for fans.

Short Stories:

Intersect Green -- Ernest Taves.

The current interest in pollution gives rise to doom stories of which this is a none-too-startling addition, leisurely building to a shock finale which is about as surprising as a tick in the Ozarks. Ho-hum.

The Teacher -- Larry Eisenberg.

Those who can, do; those who can't teach--if you've ever believed this old saw then you should quickly respond to Eisenberg's acid portrait of a teacher who descends to plagerism and successfully fools everyone, even himself. Good.

Schnoppsdays -- E. J. Wood.

There is little given to explain this future world of grubbing, backward potato farmers visited on Schnoppsdays by a Lord from the city who brings gifts and takes a census of those dying outlanders. That there should finally come a revolt of sorts is neither here nor there, just expected and therefore tiresome.

Lot 22A -- David J. Rogoff.

It is too easy to accuse Rogoff of setting up a chain of contrivances to release a deadly bacteriological strain which destroys all life--too easy because anyone familiar with research or medicine will quickly see how frighteningly possible such a chain may be. A logical, chilling and very good horror story.

When You Hear the Tone -- Thomas N. Scortia.

From his seeming deathbed an old man discovers his telephone leading him into conversations with the past and with a woman he's never known--or has he? It's smooth and sentimental, effective in its way as long as the reader doesn't demand too much of it.

Science:

Who's Who on the Moon -- Donald H. Menzel.

FEBRUARY:

Serial:

Exiled from Earth (conclusion) -- Ben Bova.

Novelettes:

This Is My Country -- Stephen Tall.

Not pointed enough to be successful as satire nor serious enough to have much real validity, Tall's hazy and quite tasteless story of a future ruined America--in which robots continue to pour off the assembly line and eventually strike for equal rights--has little to recommend it since the ending is a mistied slipknot. Very disappointing.

The Reflected Men -- A. E. van Vogt.

An almost-perfect example of van Vogt's (in)famous jerrybuilding, replete with the usual short "scenes" that stack up into a monstrosity of idiotic construction. Everything revolves around a mysteriously-powered crystal in a small-town library exhibit, with plot threads limply dangling disappearing people, duplicate people, and people from the future. There's the expected careless-crazy writing that is sometimes bad enough to be funny but never entertaining enough to be funny for very long. Garbage.

Short Stories:

Down the Digestive Tract -- Robert Sheckley.

Sigh...one more concerning the illusion and/or reality induced by drugs. This time Sheckley doesn't tell which is which, apparently hoping the shift and upset will amuse the readers. Not this one, it doesn't.

Second Run at the Data -- John Rankine.

Everything falls patly into place in this improbable story of a societal split (yes, again) in which a cold and heartless security man is forced to take a first-hand look at the "other side" of his world and himself. Nice touches here and there, but overall just too gratingly moralizing.

The Sharks of Pentreath -- Michael G. Coney.

"Remoters" are the clever inventions which allow people to spend their Shelflife (a sort of periodic cold storage necessary due to overpopulation) traveling about in mechanical bodies. Coney smoothly builds a human drama hinging on the motivations and interactions of the shark proprietors of a sea-side tourist-trap resort, making sly and effective sidewise comments, then leading to an overemotional but still good climax.

The Hero -- George R. R. Martin.

A space-war hero decides after twenty years of battle that he's ready to retire and live on the Earth he's defended but never seen. The space force wants to keep him, however, and Martin offers this clash of purposes in a tough, cynical story of the type I usually dislike but am pleased by when done as well as is here.

Scramble -- Dan Morgan.

Two guests are delivered to the wrong planet in a transmission error of the transmit machine--the man a blustery, threatening and incorrigible troublemaker,

the woman a blonde beauty with eyes for the planet's only human representative. It all ends in a welter of silly elaboration about adultery and murder.

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IF:

IF comes up with a few reasonable stories now and then, but on the whole the magazine is still unable to shake off that second-string image that clings to it like a black cloud. There is just too much emphasis on "filler" stories--light, carelessly written and often nearly unreadable strings of words that fill pages but have the lasting power of a soap bubble. But then I suppose it's better to dump it all into one publication which can be ignored by the sf elite than to spread it out and weaken two magazines. One would think the lesser pressure of a bi-monthly schedule would allow the editor to be more choosy, but it seems there's no such luck. Oh, well....

JANUARY-FEBRUARY:

Novelettes:

The Beast of 309 -- T. J. Bass.

An orphan tries to uncover the facts about his unknown origin, while Bass again makes unwieldy use of his knowledge of medical science for an authenticity that recklessly dilutes the story's worth. The orphan's growth into a young man, his financial success and failing health, and his final discovery of the nature of the "Beast"--all this promises dramatic power which Bass undermines with boring stretches of factual readout lifted straight from a textbook. Please, Dr. Bass, next time....?

Pine Doesn't Cry -- Keith Laumer.

Another diplomatic farce in a series that has made Retief one of the most popular characters of modern sf and Laumer one of sf's best-known humorists. This newest episode involves Retief in the case of a missing Bolshoi-type ballet theatre, another dastardly deed perpetrated by the villainous but funny Groaci. The humor, as usual, alternates between the amusing and strained, but Retief fans should dig it. Ok of type.

Never Cry Human -- Sterling E. Lanier.

Author of the tongue-in-cheek F&SF fantasies, Lanier tries his hand at conventional sf with conventional and disappointing results. The ploy is the familiar one of humans trying to settle a world where the natives are not exactly welcoming; but good ole homo sapiens, bless his clever little soul!, will find a way. Routine.

Short Stories:

To Grab Power -- Hayden Howard.

By far the worst story by Howard I've yet seen, it tells of a planet where the philosophies of the Centralists (who seek to create a new world of productive cities) are opposed by the Decentralists (who seek to keep this world simple, unpolluted and Walden-ish). A little madness, a little schmaltz, and endless boring diatribe. Awful.

The Man Underneath -- R. A. Lafferty.

The story of Charles Chartel, a good but not the greatest magician, is like much of Lafferty's work an emblematic, fanciful, wildly preposterous "sub-c" (subconscious) Trip. It is also a moral farce about good and ~~evil~~ not-good which Lafferty fans should enjoy.

Beneath Still Waters -- Michael G. Coney.

A doctor whose mongoloid son reflects his father's strength and weakness, an alien whose quiet study of human emotion prompts him to a sudden use of the race's advanced science, and the level-headed but not entirely objective narrator who ties all the lines into a corporate drama--Coney juggles these people well in a tense, slightly contrived but interesting puzzle. Good.

The Midnight Ride of Merlinger McKay -- George G. Willick.

A simple but mildly-engaging story of an aging human who, after having spent years on Mars, returns to Earth only to wind up in a hospital bed. The brief, initially confusing opening meshes in neatly with Willick's symbolic, slightly preposterous but pleasant climax.

The Helix -- Gerard Rejskind.

A young mathematician has made use of the Geoffrey Helix, whereby cross-town trains now seem to pass "through" each other while actually transversing a dimensional helix. The idea is carelessly wasted when Rejskind builds a mediocre display of trite soap opera watered with inhuman dialogue. Blah!

A Slight Detour -- Richard E. Peck.

Transporting a psi-talented, shape-changing prisoner, the alien Radnor of the Bailiff Corps is in a sticky situation when his prisoner escapes to Earth. Disguising his ship as a ramshackle house, Radnor tromps through 19th-century America so that Peck can make a silly speculation about the 1871 Chicago fire. Bad's the word.

The Immortal -- Lee Harding.

A rich man has been able to buy himself extended years of life as well as protection from the self-destructive urges that often drive him to attempt suicide. He gets his way, however, after Harding dallies around with an interminable phoney-philosophy dialogue. Poor.

The Man Who Devoured Books -- John Sladek.

You've heard of those experiments where worms assimilate the memories of their fellow worms by eating them? Well, Sladek seems to think the idea is funny if applied to human learning--and it may be, but not in this treatment.

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WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY:

Gerald W. Page is editor for this newly-named reincarnation of the unsuccessful COVEN 13, a large-size (11 x 8½) now being tried in an effort to get away from the sf displays (and, from what I've seen, right into the gothic/romance sub-sub-culture). I said before I wouldn't welcome the magazine back without some drastic changes, but I'm afraid a change in size wasn't exactly what I meant. The contents have, if anything, become worse, and the layout is so abominable that any fanzine editor responsible for such an effort would cringe at the cries of "crudzine!". The only relief is the professional illustrations by Tim Kirk and Jeff Jones (the rest of the illos are unimaginative smudges), but I don't know who would want to spend 60¢ for a couple of line drawings. I wouldn't worry about it, however; it certainly can't last long.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY:

Novelettes:

The Momentary Ghost -- Carleton Grindle.

The title refers to a man with a special talent for crossing over to the "afterlife", there speaking to the tormented souls who exist as grotesque reflections of their former selves. In expert hands this weird otherworld might be made to work, but Grindle's prose is treacly and his plot is messy with fatal doses of handy villainy and mawkish sentiment. Poor.

Tower of Blood -- David A. English.

An unreadable opening paragraph is followed by the most inordinately bad writing in existence, and the story (?) is some muck of swords-and-sorcery material that would be refused by any intelligent (even moderately) publisher as the ravings of a fanciful, eager and illiterate fan. A horror.

Short Stories:

The Dark Door -- Leo P. Kelley.

Lowena is a beautiful Indian woman whose marriage spelled destruction for her husband, a man Kelley makes an unmotivated beast punished in a grisly murder. Not a line of this mess makes any sense--plot, characters, everything is stale, cheapjack trash.

House of Evil -- Pauline C. Smith.

Possessed by the spirit of a dead sister, the heroine of an afternoon TV soaper lives the role both at work and at home with her annoyed husband. The mildly amusing opening gets out of hand when it degenerates into a cliché as hack-ridden as those it spoofs.

Portrait of Things to Come -- Leon Zeldis.

Readers may be pleased that Zeldis had the sense to keep his mediocre story short, but I doubt that many will be convinced by his picture of a little "Dutch Jew" artist who seeks to escape the Nazi ovens by fleeing through a supernatural Dark Door.

The Ideas -- Edith Ogutsch & Ross Rocklynne.

Todd Rayburn and "his inspiring adventures in the world of ideas" reminds one of those dreary educational films for children--already so sterile that ethel alcohol could find nothing to kill on it. As a story dealing with imagination it offers a depressing lack of it.

Mistress of Death -- Robert E. Howard & Gerald W. Page.

Page has worked a Howard fragment--just how many of these did the man leave?--into a swords-and-sorcery adventure that is different only in that its hero is a heroine, Agnes de La Fere. Page duplicates Howard exactly, right down to the last detail of thin plot, fast action, and side-splitting funny/awful dialogue. As camp, it's tolerable; as anything else it's dead weight.

Wind Magic -- Edmund Shirlan.

The little unsuccessful man who masters magic but is unable to resist using it in evil ways has long been a favorite theme for horror stories. Shirlan writes his version with verve and style, but loses out to weak motivation and a colorless comeuppance.

The Hate -- Terri E. Pinckard.

Rosemary without the Baby seems to be the intent of this short and incredibly inept story of a young wife terrorized by "Hate", which according to the author is a character unto itself. For neurotic housewives only.

The Rat and the Snake -- A. E. van Vogt.

"Mark Cray's main pleasure in life was feeding rats to his pet python."--is the opening line in van Vogt's utterly uncreative tale. You've three guesses as to how it ends, two of which will be unnecessary if you try very hard not to use any imagination. Junk.

Were-Creature -- Kenneth Pembroke.

I sympathize with the author's effort to effect a change on the usual man-into-werewolf horror story, but somehow it never quite has the ironic effect that should develop. Too much emphasis on the mood, not enough on the story, I suppose. Fair.

Short-Short Stories:

Bruce -- Saliitha Grey; Embarkation of Evil -- W.S. Coburn, Jr.; Smoke -- Leo Tifton.

Three short-shrifts, all of which are too brief to resist reading, none of which are good enough to remember a moment later.

Verse:

The Great Pyramid of Giza -- L. Sprague de Camp; Welcome as Lover Come, O Thunder -- Anthony Sander; Musings -- Robert E. Howard; The Forgotten -- Lin Carter.

Articles:

Four Letters to Clark Ashton Smith -- H. P. Lovecraft; Ghost Tour -- Andre Norton; Jade Pagoda -- E. Hoffmann Price.

In Brief -- Room only for an abbreviated Colophon here (ran out of room). SOTWJ approx. bi-weekly; via 1st-class mail, 20¢ ea., 6/51, 12/51.75; via 3rd-class, 12/ \$1.50. For UK rates, TWJ rates, names & addresses of Overseas Agents, etc., see TWJ or write the ed. No room for full Address Code, but note that K, Something of yours reviewed/mentioned herein; N, You are mentioned herein; X, Lastish, unless....
 FROM: D.Miller, 12315 Judson Rd., Wheaton, Md., USA, 20906 -- DLM