

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

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In Brief --

Still no break in publishing crisis; if crisis hasn't been resolved by end of Sept. we will probably have to suspend publication of TWJ and SOTWJ indefinitely. (Also, still no sign of the missing artwork we were supposed to receive in Aug.)

Reviewers, pls. list publisher, date, price, and # of pages with your book reviews. This information is particularly useful to the readers.

After holding this stencil since the 1st week of Sept., we finally have some LAGon news to relate (courtesy of LOCUS #121 (Chas. & Dona Brown, 3400 Ulloa St., San Francisco, CA 94116; 12/\$3, 26/\$6)): D.C. won '74 Convention (Discon II, Labor Day Weekend '74, Sheraton Park Hotel, Pro GoH Roger Zelazny, Fan GoH Jay Kay Klein, \$5 attending, \$3 supporting; Discon II, Box 31127, Wash., DC 20031).

Hugo Awards: BEST NOVEL: To Your Scattered Bodies Go, by Philip José Farmer; BEST NOVELLA: "The Queen of Air and Darkness", by Poul Anderson; BEST SHORT STORY: "Inconstant Moon", by Larry Niven; BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: A Clockwork Orange; BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Frank Kelly Freas; BEST PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE: F&SF; BEST FANZINE: LOCUS; BEST FAN ARTIST: Tim Kirk; BEST FAN WRITER: Harry Warner, Jr. (Full results in nextish.) #### 2,007 in attendance.

SOTWJ is pubbed every 1-3 weeks. Subs (via 1st-class mail): 20¢ ea., 6/\$1.10, 12/\$2; via 3rd-class mail (2 or more at time): 12/\$1.75 (12/70p UK). THE WSFA JOURNAL is 60¢ ea., 4/\$2 US, Canada, & Mex.; 25p ea., 5/£1 UK; 60¢ ea., 5/\$2.50 elsewhere. Yearly combined rate (TWJ & SOTWJ): \$10 (deposit, for continuing subs to ea.; balance refundable or applied to next yr's sub, as requested). For names & addresses of Overseas Agents, advertising info (flyers/ads in SOTWJ only), & air-mail rates, write the ed. For Address Code meaning, see SOTWJ #66 or #68 (but note that N = You are mentioned herein; K = Something of yours is mentioned/reviewed herein).

-- DLM

THE WSFA JOURNAL (Supplement)

% D. Miller

12315 Judson Road

Wheaton, Maryland

U.S.A. 20906

TO:

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

(dissecting)
 ^ THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Operational Procedure

Supervised by

Richard Delap

Magazines for MAY, 1972

Of most interest this month is a special F&SF report on the growing academic interest in science fiction, with even the regular features (book reviews and Asimov's science column) geared to fit into the schema. This report should be of great interest to readers who have been fretting over the possible "ruinous" influence wielded by the so-called scholars, and William Tenn, who is responsible for getting this report together, offers a comprehensive history and speculation of the results of this growing popularity in the halls of academe. (Personally, I believe today's audience is completely starved for imaginative concepts and is only now coming to realize its cause in the empty calories of "mass entertainment".) F&SF also has the best selection of fiction this month and ANALOG has the worst, true to form.

AMAZING STORIES -- May:

Serial:

Other Days, Other Eyes (part one) -- Bob Shaw.

Novelettes:

The Man Who Walked Home -- James Tiptree, Jr.

John Delgano is the world's first time traveler, introduced in a cryptic opening paragraph that only becomes clear as Tiptree depicts the world after his departure. Earth has become a ravaged planet on which John makes an annual brief appearance, blinking in and out of a future which is, to him, the past. The scenes of Earth's recovery from widespread destruction are handled with zest, with an Aldiss-like symbolism peering out from behind. John's dilemma, however, is never quite as emotionally involving as I think Tiptree wants it to be, and the story, though a good one, misses being the better story that was possible.

Soft Change -- Gordon Eklund.

This is an odd story about a woman, Mavique, who goes through a lot of soul-searching only to end where she began, facing the same decision. Her journey takes her to a world where the people have molded into a "maturity" of oneness, of peace; but true peace is not the same as human peace of mind, and Mavique is tortured by the melding process, memories of her aggravatingly complacent family, and her desperate love for another woman. Eklund points out that "there is a scheme to things", but I'm not convinced that he's any more aware of its nature than I am after reading this protentious ambiguity. Evocative and provocative in spots, it rings with a false sound, like a bell with a crack up its side, that simply is too flawed for comfortable listening.

Short Stories:

In Dying Venice -- Roger Ebert.

Like his first, Ebert's second story is well-written and clever, this time about the world 50 years hence where bottle-born people are the majority, where young ego-filled actors are willing to die (literally) for their art, and the intelligence of man is sinking like the city of Venice, covered by the lapping waves of indifference. It reads much like early Shockley, even down to the touches of wry humor enlivening a very basic plot, and is the kind of enjoyable tale we really don't see much of any more. Good.

Watchdog -- Jack C. Haldeman.

We're familiar now with stories about the world watched over by machines after man has departed, but Haldeman pulls a very neat little trick by involving

the reader emotionally with the great computer-complex which awaits man's return and is eventually forced to stave off the madness of loneliness in self-created realms of fantasy. It's a good idea, handled with care and refreshing simplicity. Well done.

Latest Feature -- Maggie Nadler.

This is a weak one about a firm which sells very expensive (\$50,000) television sets--sets with a secret attachment that allows owners to spy on various locations around the city, satiating their voyeuristic urges. The kicker ending is more like a shuffle, so obvious from the very beginning that only the most muddle-headed readers could possibly miss it. Mediocre.

There's No One Left to Paint the Sky -- Grant Carrington.

One day "transmitters" appear from nowhere and every person on the Earth leaves through them to explore the universe, to hear the "music of the spheres"--all, that is, except one man, a poet, who stays and ponders the fate of man's abandoned art. That's all he does, too...just ponders...at thimble-depth. Really awful.

Science:

The Scientist In Science Fiction -- David L. Book.

* * * *

ANALOG -- May:

Serial:

A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah! (part two) -- Harry Harrison.

Short Novel:

Solo Kill -- S. Kye Boulton.

In this sequel to "A Little Edge" (July '71), Baron Amanson and his fliers continue the battle against the winged Draks who swarm in the skies of Boulton's paradoxical planet and feed on the Rivermen and Valley People. Aside from the confusion of the varied races, from the clawed defenders to the beaked and murderous wing-men, there is also a confusion in the sociological morality--who is killing whom and why?--that is perhaps intended to bring home to the reader the senselessness of endless conflict. To make things even more murky there is a rope of religion, tied to an easily-toppled post of pacifism, resting on a downward slope leading to genocide. What's right? Who's wrong? Boulton seems to consider such questions mere trivia as he paces his empty characters through smash and kill and maim and action, action, Action! The story is carelessly written, unrelievedly boring and offensively without a true purpose or a conclusion. Disgusting.

Short Stories:

Lunchbox -- Howard Waldrop.

When Earth's first unmanned ship lands on Mars in 1977, problems develop that were not expected and cannot be controlled simply by viewing transmissions from a mindless scanning camera. You see, there is life on the Red Planet and it is very interested in something now. Waldrop seems afraid to go all out for total farce, so his story ends up just silly, thin on humor and short on plot. Routine.

The Observer -- Clifford D. Simak.

An intelligence suddenly awakens, aware of itself as a bodiless, memoryless entity on a planet of a double sun. Bit by bit it finds words and symbols coming into use as it needs them to comprehend the surroundings and its own self. Simak's brief journey of discovery is cleanly handled and easy reading, and while I find the climax a bit hard to accept it's still a fairly good story which should entertain most readers. Ok of kind.

Mirror Image -- Isaac Asimov.

A new "Robotics" story featuring Lije Baley and R. Daneel Olivaw would seem to be something to cheer about, but Asimov disappoints us with this tale of two robots who tell the same story, each reversing the slant to protect his human master. One is lying, but which one?, is the dilemma that puzzles detec-

tive Baley--until he applies a little human psychology to the situation. Very strained and below Asimov standards.

Science:

Celestial Mechanics -- Rowland E. Burns.

* * * *

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION -- May:

Science Fiction and the University: A Special Report:

Jazz Then, Musicology Now (article) -- William Tenn.

SF: The Academic Dimensions (article) -- Thomas D. Clareson.

Against Common Sense: Levels of SF Criticism (books) -- Darko Suvin.

Academe and I (science) -- Isaac Asimov.

Novellettes:

Sooner or Later or Never Never -- Gary Jennings.

The adventures of Crispin Mobey, a religious missionary out to convert the Anula tribe of the Australian Outback, simply have to be read to be believed. I mean, you wouldn't believe me, would you, if I said the incidents include: a fight with a 20-foot python during which a native regrets his fondness for Ex-Lax, gets all but drowned, and finally is shot through the foot with a revolver; the transportation of two trucks crammed with glass beads across 2,500 miles of Australian wilderness; a "tribal" war between a few dozen blacks over a charge of "mass murder". The religious satire gives a firm grounding to Jennings' whirlgig farce that is sometimes overwrought and pressed to giddiness but nevertheless almost always funny. Jennings is one of the few fantasists who is consistently good with humor. Enjoyable.

"Willie's Blues" -- Robert J. Tilley.

I have conflicting responses to this story of a time traveller who leaves the 21st century to visit the 1930's, aware that the object of his travel, a famed jazz musician doomed to a tragic early death, is destined to be influenced by the visit. What plagues the traveler is trying to understand and accept his contribution to history, which he eventually does as "history's method of making the achievement in art a collective thing in an oblique and cruel kind of way". My personal conflict comes from a dislike of the stereotype structure, offset by a satisfaction with Tilley's superb writing style which kept me glued to the page even when I could foresee the turns of plot. Flawed but still good.

Short Stories:

A Passage in Italics -- William Dean.

A Manhattan barbershop, circa 1952, is the setting for Dean's nostalgic slice-of-life story that builds some remarkably interesting characterizations in a very few pages and drifts ever so casually from the totally familiar to the unnervingly bizarre. The final revelations of a world that is not quite right are effective because Dean opts for the slow chill rather than the easier and less worthy sledgehammer blows. Well done.

The Scroll -- Donald Moffitt.

Christianity is not immune to disease and Moffitt concocts a terminal cancer as he tells of the discovery of another clutch of Dead Sea scrolls which prove that the godliness of Jesus is a fraud. Christians need have no fear, however, for the author is surprisingly not out to debunk their beliefs but to support them...right down to the last superstitious detail. Moffitt handles it with care and it emerges as quite a nice little story.

Masterpiece -- Ron Goulart.

Goulart's stories about Ben Jolson of the Chameleon Corps continue to weaken, and his adventures here as a liberal artist and terrorist vs. the crazed Zombada Territory dictator (who locks away all real, suspected or imagined opposition in the "goofy bin") is yet more of the familiar absurdity-for-its-own-sake. Why anyone with Goulart's talent for humor would continue to spend it on pointless exercises like this is quite beyond me; I know he's capable of much better things.

For Whom the Girl Waits -- Gertrude Friedberg.

Mr. Demperi is a substitute teacher, moving from school to school, secure in his abilities as a teacher and his noninvolvement with lasting responsibility. But Demperi is not an emotionless man, and a woman with a mysterious smile, who waits daily for another teacher outside one school, is first a fascination to him and finally his obsession. Mrs. Friedberg does an excellent job of putting readers into the man's mind, so that they too feel the terror of the unknown when it creeps stealthily into the routine. A fine, fine story.

* * *

GALAXY -- May-June:Serial:

The Gods Themselves (conclusion) -- Isaac Asimov.

Novelette:

Trouble with G.O.D. -- David Gerrold.

A filler episode in the Harlie saga--to be novelized as When Harlie Was One--this story is strictly a set-up for events to follow. Harlie, the computer which psychologist Auberson dubs "half-oracle and half-human", is still trying to prove himself capable of providing a profit for the sponsoring company and comes up with a plan for an even larger unit that will have abilities commensurate with its anagram name, G.O.D. I've not been able to get much involved with these stories, which fluctuate between humor and corny melodrama in careless leaps, but if you like the stories so far you may find this one equally likeable.

Short Stories:

The Reply -- James Gunn.

Those who have followed Gunn's "Listeners" series will find this short episode a too-brief yet worthwhile sequence that brings the Capellans' reply to Earthly inquirers after a century and a half of dedicated work. I can't begin to guess if it will mean much to new readers, but fans of these stories should find it satisfactory as a conclusion to the preceding works while jumping in frustration at Gunn's hanging-in-the-air final sentence. (It certainly ought to sell copies of the novelization due later this year from Scribners, anyway.)

Robbie and David and Little Dahl -- W. Macfarlane.

On the planet Brocaal, young Robbie proves to have remarkable talents, none of which are approved by the religious dictatorship ruling his home, Harmonious City, for his talents are in devising ways to circumvent the rules. Escaping the city, Robbie only partially understands the facts which come to light about his planet, conflicts of opposed societies and time travel that prove almost too strong a match for his quick wit. I felt Macfarlane has something specific in mind with this effort, but damned if I can figure out what it is. Unsatisfying. Gone Fishing -- David Rome.

Rome's story is a quasi-religious item that misses its mark. First there is a boy whose origins are very uncertain and is possibly a savior for the pioneers on a desert world of Alpha Centauri. Next there are his foster parents who find themselves trudging into the desert in search of water, guided only by faith. Finally there is the destruction of Earth, vaguely blamed on those complacent stay-at-homes who are "growing fat on her corpse". The story is only effective if the reader succumbs to blind faith, but even then it's calculated rather mawkishly. Routine.

The Grand Illusions -- Larry Eisenberg.

Eisenberg's Duckworth series has always seemed to me a watered-down, conservative version of the sort of nonsense Goulart writes; and this latest story, in which Duckworth's new "holographic projector" halts a campus riot, is as tame as Goulart is hysterical. Neither author seems concerned with the immorality at the base of cruel wheeling and dealing, and this may be one reason why I find their humor so often displeasing--Goulart for his unrelieved cynicism, Eisenberg for his seeming naivete. Fair.

The Langley Circuit -- Sandy Fisher.

Mansard is the perfect man for the first encounter with an ET--a dispassionate human unit of a machine which picks up emotional readings. Yet he finds himself involved with the emotions emanating from the alien ship, emotions which increase his fear that his superiors will order the alien destroyed. As love develops so fear increases, and Fisher's first-person narrative gives the reader an insight into the explosive psychological reaction. It's a finely-crafted story and deserves attention.

THE CON GAME: Mid-October thru December 1972

October --

- 19-22 -- DETROIT TRIPLE FAN FAIR/STAR TREK CON, Detroit Hilton; registration \$3 advance, \$4 at door. For info, etc.: D.T.F.F., 14845 Anne, Allen Park, MI 48101.
20-22 -- CAPCON, State Univ. of N.Y. in Albany, N.Y.; registration \$3.50. For info, etc.: Capital District SF Fan Federation, Box 801, Albany, NY, 12201..
21-22 -- MILEHICON 4, Sheraton Inn, Denver, Colo.; Toastmaster, Bob Vardeman; Writing Contest Judge, Edward Bryant. For info, etc.: MileHiCon 4, % Judith Brownlee, 1556 Detroit #1, Denver, CO 80206.

November --

- 17-19 -- PHILCON, Sheraton Hotel, Philadelphia, Penna; John Brunner, Principal Speaker. For info: Ron Stoloff, 10714 Haldeman Ave., Phila., PA 19116.
24-26 -- CHAMBANACON 2, Champaign, Ill.; GoH, Keith Laumer; registration \$3 advance, \$4 at door. For info, etc.: Don Blyly, 825 W. Russell, Peoria, IL 61606.
24-26 -- FANTASY FILM FANS INTERNATIONAL, Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, Calif.; registration \$10 advance, \$15 at door (excludes hotel & banquet); Doubles, \$18/day; exhibits, TV episodes, amateur film contest, tours, collector's auction, costume parade, souvenir book, continuous movies, etc. For info, etc.: POBox 74866, Los Angeles, CA 90004. (Make checks payable to "Richard M. Sncary".)

December --

- 15-17 -- PARTYCON III, Ramada Inn Downtown Dallas, Texas; registration \$3 advance, \$4 at door; room rates: Singles, \$15, Doubles, \$22; movies include Ghost of Zorro ('48 serial), The Unholy Three ('30 sound version), Freaks (by Tod Browning), Acc Drummond, King Kong, Brides of Fu Manchu, and others; SF, Comics, Pulps, Nostalgia. For info, etc.: 11830 Hampstead Lane, Dallas, TX 75230.

((Thanks to LOCUS (Charlie & Dona Brown, 3400 Ulloa St., San Francisco, CA 94116), LUNA MONTHLY (Frank & Ann Dietz, 655 Orchard St., Oradell, NJ 07649), NOSTALGIA NEWS (POBox 34305, Dallas, TX 75234), & misc. flyers for above information. --ed.))

ON THE MOVE -- A Few Changes-of-Address

Barry, Jeremy USNCS, APO NY, 09843.
 Bowers, Bill P.O. Box 354, Wadsworth, OH 44281.
 Bushyager, Mr. & Mrs 1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076.
 Davis, Hank 4268 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11229.
 Edciken, Yalc 606 W. Comelia St., Apt. 576, Chicago, IL 60657.
 Faig, Ken, Jr. 421 Kungs Way, Joliet, IL 60435.
 Frolich, Dany (& Mrs) 1933 JoAnn Pl., New Orleans, LA 70114.
 Kindt, Leo Mispelstraat 29, s'-Gravenhage 2025, Holland.
 Korbas, Charles ... 1611 Miller St., Apt. 101, Honolulu, HI 96813.
 Mayer, Los (& Mrs) 11609 Grandview Ave., Wheaton, MD 20902.
 Mattingly, Gary ... 913 Pierre St., Manhattan, KS 66502.

Mail Returned by P.O. from: Joseph David Jaye & Ben Miller. Anyone?

RECENT REISSUES: Book Reviews
by Michael T. Shoemaker

Night Stories From The Rest of the Robots, by Isaac Asimov (Pyramid Books T-2565; 1971 (1964); 159 pp.; 75¢).

The only stories from the hardcover that are left out are the two Danoo Olivaw novels. I often wondered where Asimov got the title of this collection, and in one of his introductions he explains it. These stories are the rest of the robot stories, those not collected in I, Robot.

The first story, "Robot AL-76 Goes Astray", is a very minor piece, but not without some interest. On the other hand, "Victory Unintentional" is a superb, humorous story. In it, a war with Jupiter--which would have proved disastrous to Earth--is prevented because the Jovians mistake some robot emissaries as the real Earth inhabitants. The next story, "First Law", is the only one I did not like. It is an unbelievable and inconsistent, short, trifle. "Let's Get Together" is a very good story which presents the problem of finding ten perfect duplicates of human beings, each of which is carrying a part of a nuclear bomb. "Satisfaction Guaranteed" is another minor effort. "Risk", a good story, shows why only a man can do certain jobs. "Lenny" seems to be more about Susan Calvin than about Robots, but is a very good job with some interesting ideas. "Galley Slave" has a good claim to being the best story in the book. This involves the courtroom battle surrounding a lawsuit against US Robots and Mechanical Men, Inc. The lawsuit concerns a proofreading robot that seems to have made unauthorized changes in the final copy. The whole story is very well worked out.

This book is every bit as good as I, Robot, and deserves a place on your shelf next to that volume.

Vulcan's Hammer, by Philip K. Dick (Ace Books 86608; 1972 (1960); 154 pp.; 75¢).

This is an old, worn-out, formula story and for that reason it probably seems worse than it really is. It tells of Vulcan III, a hidden super-computer which runs the world, and of the underground attempt to overthrow the computer.

Cities of Wonder, ed. Damon Knight (Macfadden-Bartoll 166; 1971 (1967); 251 pp.; 95¢).

This is a theme anthology, the nature of which is explained by the title. It is a very fine anthology, but the seasoned reader will probably be familiar with most of its stories.

"Single Combat", by Robert Abernathy, about a city that wages a "war" against a man, is not exactly sf--but it works. The next two stories present post-holocaust cities: "Dumb Waiter", Walter M. Miller's famous story concerning a man struggling against a computer which does not want the city repopulated after the war; and "Jesting Pilot", by Henry Kuttner, in which the city leaders brainwash the populace into believing they are behind a barrier, safe from radiation.

Robert A. Heinlein's "It's Great to be Back" is a hackneyed story about a couple who have returned to Earth from the moon. "Billennium", by James Ballard, is a good story of the "standing room only" overpopulated future. "Oakie", by James Blish, the first of the "Cities in Flight" series, is here also. "The Luckiest Man in Denov", by C.M. Kornbluth, is a clever extrapolation of future politics. E.M. Forster's classic "The Machine Stops" is about a totally automated city and what happens when things break down. "The Underprivileged", by Brian Aldiss, is a minor story about a world-wide city on another planet. Another classic is Stephen Vincent Benet's "By the Waters of Babylon", on the theme of our primitive descendants exploring the ruins of New York.

The volume ends with yet another classic, a particular favorite of mine, John W. Campbell's "Forgetfulness". Written with great clarity and sensitivity, it shows that a forgotten technology does not necessarily indicate a decadent race. I think that this story has always been underrated.

* * * * *

GALE RESEARCH CO., Book Tower, Detroit, MI 48226 --

From a recent News Release:

"The SF Index, a major new and comprehensive bibliography of the science fiction and fantasy book, has been announced for 1974 publication by the Gale Research Company, Detroit reference book publishers. Research and editorial effort on the project will be directed by R. Reginald, a professional librarian, bibliographer, and collector in the SF field.

"Mr. Reginald indicates the index will not be based on any previously published material, but will be compiled completely anew from the traditional sources, including public and private collections of speculative fiction, and the standard library trade tools. An attempt will be made to list all English-language first editions, together with any subsequent title changes; original paperbacks will be considered first editions.

"The typical entry will include author, title, publisher, publishing date, and some indication of the type of book listed (novel, anthology, collection, poetry, plays, etc.). Current plans also call for separate sections covering pseudonyms and biographies of selected authors, plus an annotated bibliography of science fiction reference works.

"Douglas Menville has been appointed associate editor of the project, and Barry Levin and Michael Part are assistants. Others are expected to become associated with the undertaking in its later stages.

"Those wishing either to help or to learn more about the book should contact the editor at his home, Hill House, 379 Edgerton Drive, San Bernardino, California 92405; or meet him personally at either Westercon or LACon. Credit will be generously given."

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC., 180 Varick St., New York, NY 10014 --

A continuation of "The Dover science-fiction & ghost story library", the listing of which began in SOTWJ some time ago:

The Time Stream, The Greatest Adventure, The Purple Sapphire, by John Taine (Eric Temple Bell) (\$2.50; paperbound; #21180-0; 4 illust; v / 532 pp.; 5 3/8" x 8 3/8") -- Unabridged reprinting of three full novels by John Taine.

A Princess of Mars and A Fighting Man of Mars, by Edgar Rice Burroughs (\$2.00; paperbound; #21140-1; v / 356 pp.; 5 3/8" x 8 1/2") -- Two full novels.

Three Martian Novels, by Edgar Rice Burroughs (\$2.50; paperbound; #20039-6; vi / 499 pp.; 5 3/8" x 8 1/2") -- Full text of Thuvia, Maid of Mars, Chessmen of Mars, and The Master Mind of Mars. With 16 illus. by J. Allen St. John.

At the Earth's Core, Pellucidar, Tanar of Pellucidar, by Edgar Rice Burroughs (\$2.50; paperbound; #21051-0; v / 433 pp.; 13 illust. by J. Allen St. John & Paul Berdanier) -- First three novels about "the dinosaur world inside the hollow Earth".

To the Sun? and Off on a Comet!, by Jules Verne (\$2.50; paperbound; #20634-3; 462 pp.; 5 3/8" x 8") -- "These two novels, grounded in scientific fact and soaring beyond, are reprinted here in the famous but rare Edward Roth translations." Unabridged; with 49 drawings selected from 1860's French editions.

From the Earth to the Moon and All Around the Moon, by Jules Verne (\$2.00; paperbound; #20633-5; 476 pp.; 5 3/8" x 8") -- Unabridged Roth translations of two more Verne novels, with 41 illustrations from French first editions.

Last and First Men, and Starmaker, by Olaf Stapledon (\$2.50; paperbound; 5 3/8" x 8 1/2"; #21962-3; v / 438 pp.) -- Unaltered reprints of both novels.

Best Ghost Stories of J.S. LeFanu, by J. Sheridan LeFanu (\$2.50; paperbound; xvii / 467 pp.; 5 3/8" x 8 1/2"; #20415-4) -- 16 stories of supernatural fiction, "more than half of which have never before been available in the United States". Edited and with introduction by E. F. Bleiler.

Best Science Fiction Stories of H.G. Wells (\$1.95; paperbound; #21531-8; vi / 303 pp.; 5 3/8" x 8 1/2") -- Unabridged reprint of all 17 stories from 1st edition.

S. F. PARADE: Book Reviews

The Light That Never Was, by Lloyd Biggle, Jr.

Well, once again we are faced with a novel that starts out excellently and then cops out on the ending. I, for one, am getting rather tired of this particular writing trend, especially in this case.

Donov is a tourist planet, not least because of the many famous artists who have come there in the past to paint by its "perfect" light. The government, cashing in on the planet's fame as the subject of many masterpieces, turned the planet's major industry into tourism, helped no little bit by those of the remaining artists who paint hack work to sell to the gullible tourists.

To this world comes Jorno, perhaps one of the richest men in the known galaxy, and a professional "do-gooder". He has plans to save a group of animaloids (intelligent non-human aliens) who have fled their home world because of the "riots" that have slaughtered their contemporaries when the humans that lived on their planet rose in violence against them. (This "riot" followed those that had occurred on other worlds when the humans slaughtered the alien natives.) Animaloids are second-class citizens in a human-controlled galaxy, and the only way that they can gain any "status" is by working through a human "master".

Faced with the problems of the animaloids' arrival, and the reaction to their presence, is the World Manager's Secretary, Wargen. Not only must he deal with this problem, but he must also cope with the problem of thefts by non-residents of Donovan, dressed up as artists and stealing small articles of little value in an attempt to irritate the rural populace. In addition, there's the fact that the riots have traced a recognizable course across the stars, hitting 26 worlds and their different alien-human populations, and the next world due to be hit is Donovan itself (which lacks an indigent animaloid population). Are the petty thefts by fake artists an attempt by an outside force to cause a riot on Donovan, this time against the artists?

The author thus sets an unusual confrontation between opposing forces: the unknown cause of the riots, and Wargen, trying to stop their appearance on Donovan. He builds carefully to this climax, establishing fine characterizations on the way, and then cops out on the ending by killing this force in the last thirty pages, destroying the confrontation, destroying the novel, and adding a summing-up chapter at the close which neglects to tie in the questions that he has been raising throughout the novel. Sigh!

-- STAN BURNS

Lord of Light, by Roger Zelazny.

The dude who built his name on short stories (that are far out) has been playing around with religions and myths in the few books he's written, and this is by far the best. It's a great big free-wheeling book, out-dated as Spiro and almost as funny, cynical, irreverent, sacrilegious, and all them other superlatives that go well with the punch-in-the-gut humor of the Great Society.

This is a stand-out work among anything even Zelazny himself has done. It shows a talent in color, mood, and character he hasn't shown for a lack of space in anything he has written earlier. It has a style with its roots set in Heinlein, and could probably pass for Heinlein if it were written first-person and if Sam, the hero, came on a little more chummy and regular-guyish.

The book is about one god, or one fake, or one hero (depends on how you look at it) and his fight against a pantheon of Hindu gods in the name of man. 'Course they aren't real gods, otherwise this wouldn't be science fiction (wish somebody had brought that up before Sturgeon got his Nebula). The gods are the first colonists or their children, of a distant colony planet, reincarnated for hundreds of years. They are among the lucky aristocracy of a dirty, backward planet. Mahasamatman, Sam, the hero/fake/god, is a rebellious aristocrat, trying to cut the

regular guy in on the gravy that the gods enjoy. He's a cross between Mark Twain and Jerry Rubin, too familiar with his enemy to have anything like respect or fear of the gods and too old and experienced to be terribly fiery. He's calculating enough to win several large skirmishes with the gods in several incarnations. He lacks the unbelievable, inhuman foresight of comic-book characters like Gordon Dickson's Clotus Grahme, and wins the war in the end by taking advantage of luck and former foes that go his way, instead of planning who's going to breathe when as the aforementioned Grahme dude seemed to do. This guy's a lot more fun to watch anyway. He attacks and sacks a Brahmin reincarnation temple, and as a final insult to Brahmin, loads slugs in all the pray-o-mats there.

Being the hero doesn't make Sam the exclusively interesting character. Zelazny has as many real live tangible characters in Lord of Light as Panshin did in Rite of Passage. Also, Zelazny has a rare ability to block a character out into firm reality in a matter of a few words. Lord Niritti; Taraka, lord of the Demons; Shiva; Yama; Ratri; all are filled out within a few words. Their actions and reactions are exclusively their own and very dependably portrayed.

About the only complaint I have about the book is its multitude of styles. It's a pretty literary complaint, granted, but it gets to be bothersome after a while to see a fast-moving action plot part on one page to get into one of the many funny parts of the book, which are generally in a super-stilted, very religious, very Victorian style, completely incongruous with the rest of the book. An example of this type of humor comes near the beginning of the book, while Yama Dharma is still trying to call Sam from heaven:

"...For six days he had offered many kilowatts of prayer, but the static kept him from being heard on high. Under his breath, he called upon the more notable of the current fertility deities, invoking them in terms of their most prominent Attributes."

There's another memorable part further on where two peasants are anticipating the arrival of a much-rumored miracle in which a man sits while dinner is departing him, then pulls on a handle and watches it being swept away in a rush of water. Too good for me to spoil by copying it here, so you'll have to read it for yourself.

The book's great entertainment. Not much more, but entertainment enough to make you ignore its lack of relevance.

-- RICHARD WADHOLM

The Barons of Behavior, by Tom Purdom.

Picture a future where everyone has his own home computer that can be voice-programmed--where it controls not only the household, but also gives access to the communication system, the library, and the wall-sized TV. A world where most people are experts at unarmed combat, and anyone can visit Europe for the summer on his guaranteed annual income. A world where the psychologist is King--where he can type a person to a personality type, and then manipulate him at will. In this world, politicians hire psychologists to manipulate their constituencies through psychological typing and control. Into the arena steps Nicholson, a psycho-therapist, who would try to use their techniques to defeat them and gain the power to legislate against such manipulation. How he does so is the plot.... I have several gripes about this novel. In the beginning the author sets up a war between Nicholson and the psych-manipulators; instead of following through with it, he settles for winning a minor skirmish in the first battle! And there are several instances where the author starts to go into the characterization of Nicholson and his wife, but then stops and leaves the reader hanging, with over-subtle hints into characterization and unrevealed depths that would have added to the insight of the novel. This could have been an excellent novel, had the author taken the trouble to follow through with his major confrontation, and added about a hundred pages to the length, completing the characterization at which he only hinted. It's a shame to see what could have been a major Hugo-Nebula contender fizzle out from a promising start into a hack effort....

-- STAN BURNS