no. 84

THE WSFA JOURNAL

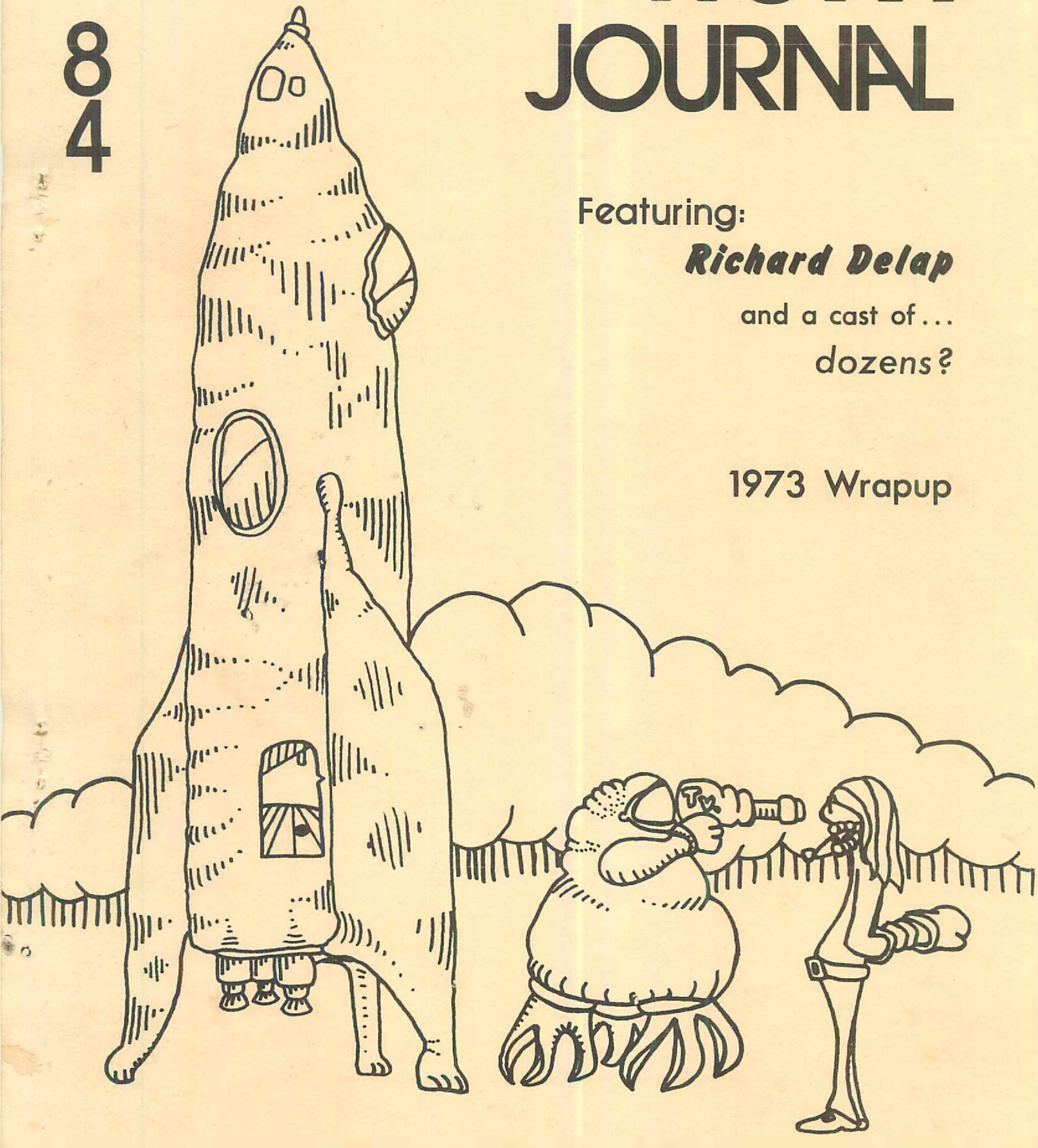
Featuring:

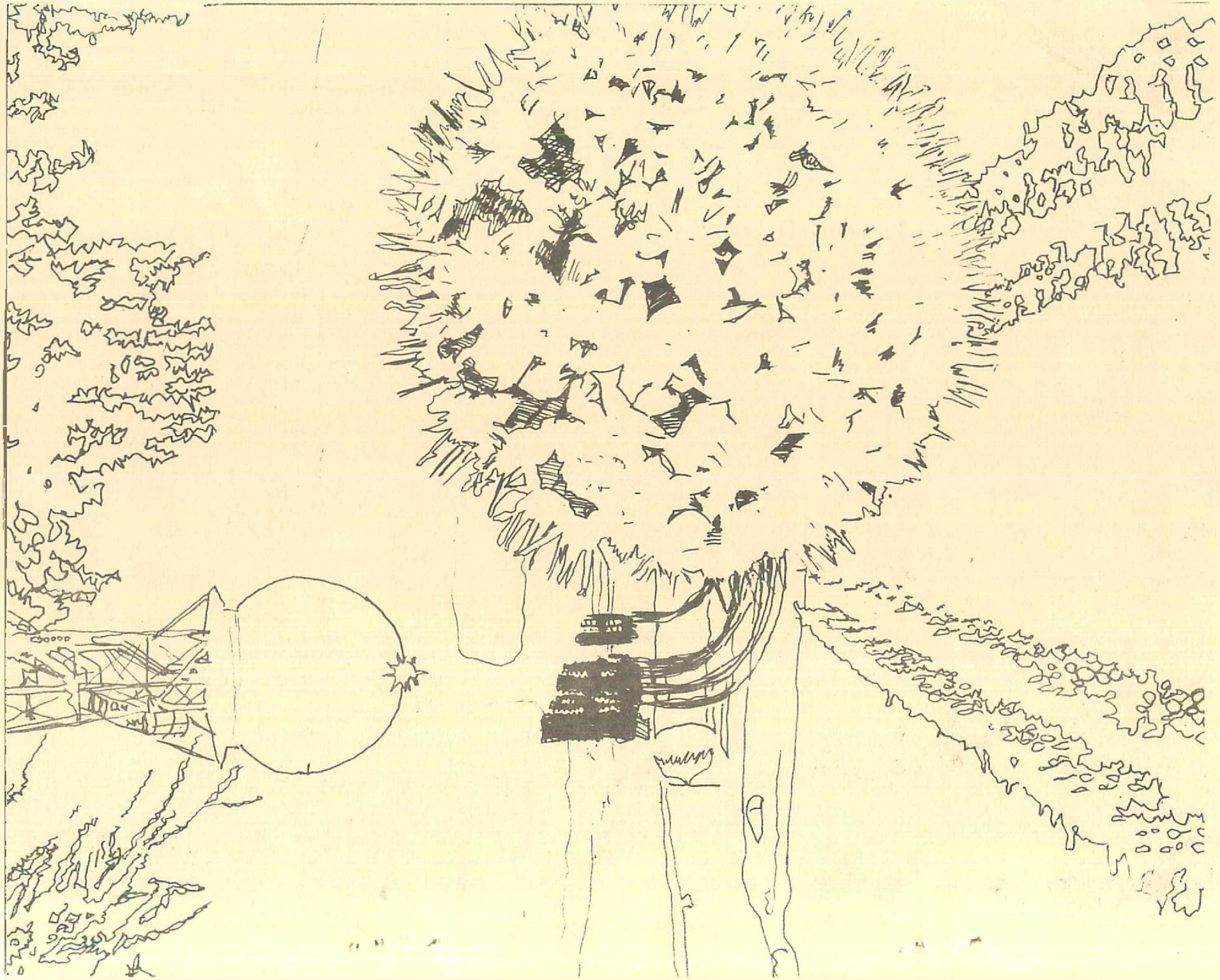
Richard Delap

and a cast of...

dozens?

1973 Wrapup





THE WSFA JOURNAL

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STAFFING: The WSFA Press consists of the following personnel—

Editor-in-chief and Publisher: Donald L. Miller
12315 Judson Road
Wheaton, MD, USA, 20906

Associate Editor and Publications Manager:
Bill Hixon
870 Quince Orchard Blvd. #T2
Gaithersburg, MD, USA 20760

Associate Editors, Section Editors, and Publishers:

David W. Weems
P. O. Box 309
Oakton, VA, USA 22124

Wayne V. Piatt
P. O. Box 309
Oakton, VA, USA, 22124

Art Editor: Alexis Gilliland
4030 S. Eighth Street
Arlington, VA, USA 22204

SECTION EDITORS:
David W. Weems — Bookworld
Wayne V. Piatt — Articles and Prozines
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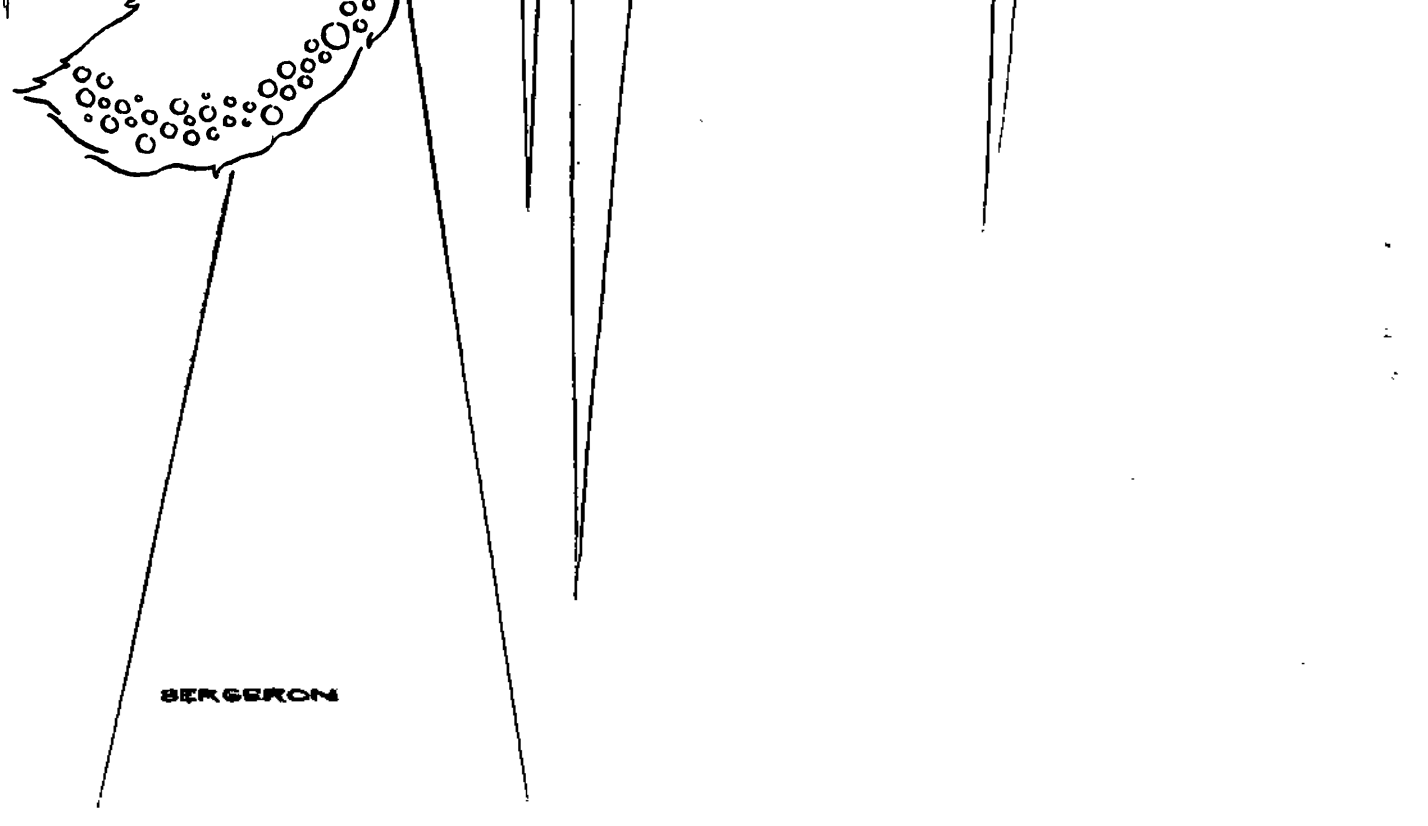
Staff Reviewers: David Weems, Don D'Ammassa, Jim Goldfrank, Michael Walsh, Michael T. Shoemaker, Richard Delap, Les Mayer, Bill Hixon, Wayne V. Piatt, Kim Weston, and Jim Lawson.

Staff Artists: Alexis Gilliland and Ray Ridenour.

Overseas Agents: AUSTRALIA—Robin Johnson, GPO Box 4039, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia; GERMANY—Frank Flugge, 5868 Letmathe, Eichendorffweg 16, West Germany; JAPAN—Takumi Shibano, 1-14-11. O-kayama, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan; S. AFRICA—A. B. Ackerman, Cheshire Home, 890 Main Rd., Moseley, 4001 S. Africa; U.K.—Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Cresc., Holmes Chapel, Cheshire GW4 7NR England.


BERGERON

'73 WRAPUP

The Year In Review

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973

by: Richard Delap

The Best Science Fiction of the Year #2, edited by Terry Carr (Ballantine 03312; $1.25; 370 pp.; 1973)

The 1973 Annual World's Best SF, edited by Donald A. Wollheim; with Arthur W. Saha (DAW UQ1053; 95¢; 253 pp.; 1973) hardcover: SF Book Club; $1.98

Best SF: 1972, edited by Harry Harrison and Brian W. Aldiss (Putnam; $5.95; 254 pp.; 1973) paper: Berkley 02381; 95¢

Best Science Fiction Stories of the Year, 2nd Annual Collection, edited by Lester del Rey (E. P. Dutton & Co.; $6.95; 251 pp.; 1973)

Best Science Fiction for 1973, edited by Forrest J. Ackerman (Ace 91360; $1.25; 268 pp.; 1973)

We're down one volume from last year's six, as DAW Books has apparently dropped the Richard Davis horror anthology. So here are five new books to help us gain an overview of last year's SF output, and, as expected, quite a selection of works have been culled from the original anthologies in addition to the magazines. And if readers were depressed by the astoundingly low quality of last year's stories, they won't be much encouraged by the majority of this year's efforts. While each volume has a share of good stories, only one can claim that its contents adequately represent the variety and high points of excellence in a year of heavy publication. The rest range from passably good work to incredible ineptitude both in selection and presentation of stories. Eight stories are printed twice in this year's books, two of which even seem to deserve the distinction and have in addition collected Hugo awards.

In this year's race to present us with the best, Terry Carr has left all competition far behind with his selection of sixteen stories that Ballantine has presented in 370 meaty pages for the delightfully reasonable price of $1.25. (In space alone, not to mention content, this is such a real bargain that I fully expect Carr to run away with the lead position in the fan polls for best anthology, and Ballantine is to be thanked for giving the public SF quality without making them pay through the nose for it.)

Carr is also to be appreciated as the only editor willing to give lengthy space to what is surely one of the best science fiction stories in many, many years, Gene Wolfe's phenomenal novella, "The Fifth Head of Cerberus". There is no excuse for the other editors, Harrison/Aldiss especially, to have ignored a work which so perfectly represents complex cultural and character interaction, which is possible only in an SF mileu, by introducing a reasoned cross between the objective and the subjective. I have discussed this work at length elsewhere, and I will only tell you here that you should read this story, which is so unique, so special, that it truly lives up to that overused term

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

"instant classic". Your standing as a dedicated SF fan is indubitably threatened if you have failed to read it. (And when you've finished, run to the bookstore to get the Scribner hardcover edition, which contains two additional novellas which together with the title story form one of the most outstanding SF novels of the decade.)

Tie-winners of this year's Hugo, Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth's "The Meeting" and R. A. Lafferty's "Eurema's Dam", are two fine and quite different examples of popular current SF. The Pohl/Kornbluth story deals with the parents of "handicapped" children and speculates on the moral choices forced on them by the progress of science, a difficult theme handled with compassion and restraint. Lafferty's tale, on the other hand, is an hilarious and abrasive story of "the last dumb kid ever born", whose awkwardness forces him to devise a means to muddle through this uncaring world. His development of intelligent machines that eventually run the world makes him even more an outcast in his society, at last moving him to discover the ultimate light of his true talent. Mildly moralizing but without preachments, this is Lafferty at his near-best, dancing over SF cliches with Fred Astaire precision and having a hell of a good time.

Poul Anderson's impressive "Fortune Hunter" tells of a desparate and pitiable man, his actions selfish and well-planned, whose mind is as polluted as the urban environmental future in which Anderson places him. The man is morally corrupt but he is not totally insensitized by his corruption, and it is this quality which gives the reader a strong emotional identification and makes his story a truly sad and moving one. Edward Bryant's "Their Thousandth Season", a prize-winning Clarion story, is one of the better Cinnebar stories, powerful yet delicate assemblage of memory vignettes among bored and unhappy immortals at an elite party gathering. Dante's fundemental truth—"There is no greater sorrow than to recall, in misery, the time when we were happy."—is dramatised with staggering impact for we who do see its diminished reflection in a normal lifespan.

A single "family" unit of the future—"eighteen adults (two triplet marriages, a quad, and a group of eight)"—in a home in the Himalyas is examined by Joanna Russ with brevity but startling depth in "Nobody's Home". But Russ is not looking at (or for) Utopia. She finds the human problems basic—society's problems as a whole are built from individual relationships—and these personal stories tell us more about society than society itself ever can. Our strength, philosophically, is in human terms only, as is our need, but is this ever going to be enough to cover the imperfections in the human race? If this story doesn't make you stop and think, I would suppose that Russ is seeing much too clearly for you. Clear away the bric-a-brac, the debris of your time in space. Read it again. And again. Continue to do so until you see something, anything, new. Then you'll find that newness is very old indeed, and that Russ's insight is remarkbaly keen.

Grahame Leman's "Controversial Mode" (included in Pohl's best anthology of last year, where it made its first U. S. appearance) is a funny yet pessimistic view of the future relationship between man and machine. Robert Silverberg's "Caliban" transports a man with a hairy, imperfect body to the future where people have remolded themselves to the "standard model"—blond, blue-eyed, slender and sleek—examining the underlying theme of conformity vs. individualism on a simple but entertaining level. Alexei

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

and Cory Panshin's "Sky Blue" is a moral fable on ecology that proposes we're gonna need some help to get out of the mess we've created. Naomi Mitchison's "Miss Omega Raven" is a carefully complex narration by an intelligent bird, who tells of her rise to power and glory under the guidance of her respected creator, a God-man. The clipped sentences and direct lines of thought make an interesting counterpoint to the hazy, slightly sinister undertones.

In "Hero", Joe. W. Haldeman writes the typical ANALOG story of military tactics with an untypical touch of rough language and blunt sex, dealing with the training given to a conscripted army sent to battle aliens. It's a harsh and brutal story, but one that is true to its purpose. Gordon Eklund's "Grasshopper Time" is an occasionally powerful but vaguely detailed account of two youngsters cared for by a recluse who is the offspring of an unexplained human-alien mating; and James Tiptree, Jr.'s "Painwise" is an uneven but slickly written story of a man who has been "rewired" to feel no bodily pain, an isolation which leads to a far more troublesome psychological pain.

The final three stories have all proved popular ones, but I find them the least valuable of the book. Ben Bova's "Zero Gee" is a silly and psychologically contrived story of an astronaut who wants to try sex in free-fall. Robert Silverberg's "When We Went to See the End of the World" deals with people discussing the end of the world in banal party chatter as the world around them disintegrates, but the story is totally trapped in its irony and crushed by heavy-handedness. And William Rotsler's "Patron of the Arts" presents a new electronic art-medium (a "sensatron") and a love triangle, yet Rotsler is so busy plucking a sentimental tune that he fails to notice his characters are depthless, his electronic device a bittersweet contrivance, and his plot a generally aimless chase after traditional romanticism. (Rotsler's story is published here in a revised version that lengthens but doesn't really improve the original story which appeared in an earlier Carr anthology.) The popularity of the foregoing three stories, despite my dislike of them, gained enough attention to make me shoulder aside my objections, however, and not chastise their inclusion here.

As a unit, Carr's selections are more than just entertainment. They represent thoughtful editorial choice that truly and honestly condenses the year's voluminous output to a worthy presentation. If you're going to buy only one "best" volume, Carr's book is the one to buy.

* * * * * * *

Wollheim gets his volume off to a bad start with a slightly hysterical introduction in which he states: "Lately there has been a rising tide of what we are coming to think of as Science Fiction by People Who Hate Science Fiction." He denounces the deluge of original anthologies (from which he has selected only two stories, neither of them very good), calling Again, Dangerous Visions a "remarkable book", yet including no stories from it because he feels the book should be judged "as a whole"—perhaps the most nonsensical reason ever offered for rejecting a source of quality material.

A notable story here is W. Macfarlanes "Changing Woman", in which the modern world complements the magical work of a legendary Indian woman in a very amusing

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

mixture that includes one of the funniest love scenes you'll ever read. Almost as good is Frederik Pohl's much-discussed "The Gold at the Starbow's End", a subtle and sometimes very nasty satire which contrasts the progress of a starship crew with the regress of the earth they've left behind and throws in some tricky moral somersaults along the way.

"The Man Who Waked Home" by James Tiptree, Jr. is an interesting bit about the world's first time traveler, but lacks emotional depth and becomes a good story rather than a great one. T. J. Bass's "Rorqual Maru" is one of the stories in his Nebish Hive World series, a mildly entertaining episode in which the future's mutated humans struggle to gain an adequate food supply in a world just beginning to recover from man's widespread destruction. Robert J. Tilley's "Willie's Blues" is another time-traveler yarn (this one with the traveler worried about the influence his visit will have) that manages to soften its stereotypes with a smooth writing style. The plot of Vernor Vinge's "Long Shot" is quite predictable, yet his focus of character interest, a cyborg ship sent from a dying Earth to Alpha Centauri, is quite engaging and makes for a moderately entertaining tale.

The remaining four stories have less to recommend them.

Of initial interest perhaps is Michael G. Coney's "Oh, Valinda!", since its appearance here marks its first U. S. publication. Coney here sees the future of man, reaching out for new worlds to exploit, as a continuing adventure, but like most of the early pulp adventures the situation as all and the characters are automatically molded to fit. He takes a lot for granted in assuming the reader will be convinced by interworld relations that, for all the mystery of giant leviathons and otherworld social customs, is a dry and mostly boring rehash of pedestrian Earthlike politics, policies, and stubbornness. He uses a love affair (which has occurred before the story's opening) to motivate the explosive conclusion without ever once delving into the character of the lovers, forcing the reader to interpret the actions with uncertain referents. The story is so plodding, however, that I doubt many will find such an interpretation worth the bother.

Like his previous "The Queen of Air and Darkness", Poul Anderson's "Goat Song" is an award-winning story (both the Nebula and the Hugo) that seems to bowl over readers with fast-moving melodrama and brilliant color, so much so, in fact, that they apparently confuse the simplistic philosophising for probing insight and fail to see the story for the inelegant and ill-thought jumble it really is. Clifford D. Simak's "To Walk a City's Street" makes a similar mistake and covers a lot of hokey plotting with curt, realistic dialogue that sounds good but is equally unreasonable and misleading. And finally, Phyllis MacLennan's "Thus Love Betrays Us" tells once more of man and alien but misses capturing the desparation and irony of the title by using a flat and toneless style.

Wollheim's collection offers some fairly good reading, but as a whole is a weak cross-section that lacks the quality to represent the year's best.

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In the introduction to the Harrison/Aldiss volume, Harry Harrison gets bitchy and proclaims "very much of what is now published with the SF label is not science fiction

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

at all". He goes on to say "what I am against is bad fiction of any kind, and particularly bad science fiction"; but his pronouncement and slightly dictatorial demands for SF are negated by the selection of stories he thinks are "both good science fiction and good fiction", when in fact most of them are mediocre as either.

Out of a dozen stories, I find only two worthy contenders for status. The late Ken W. Purdy's "In the Matter of the Assassin Merefirs" is a stingingly good satire of the little man caught up in the wheels of justice that grind him to mincemeat in the so-called effort to protect him. (In light of recent revelations about the corrupted machinations of American government, the story is bloodcurdlingly perceptive.) Christopher Priest's startling "The Head and the Hand" is a grand guignol tale of a man who has become a notorious and wealthy celebrity by lopping off parts of his body as entertainment for frenzied audiences. Reduced to a limbless head and torso, his final grotesque public appearance amalgamates a variety of electric psychological jolts that will have the reader's hair standing on end.

Joe W. Haldeman's "Hero" makes a second appearance, but the remainder of the collection has nothing of much interest.

Brian W. Aldiss's "As For Our Fatal Continuity..." is a rather bland spoof about the intellectualization of art, with a little religious satire tossed in to make it even more difficult. James Gunn's "The Old Folks" gives senior citizens a bizarre revenge upon their thoughtless children, but the plot twists are crude devices that reduce the supposed threat to fake-sinister preposterousness. Robert F. Young's "The Years" is yet another time-travel yarn, short but much too obvious. Andre Carneiro's "Darkness" is a moral tale with no real moral and a mystery with no resolution, an essentially empty story about a plague of darkness in which men who were previously blind become the experts on survival.

"Weinachtabend" is an alternate-world story that serves as a sounding board for a study of the inalterable human condition. Unlike Keith Robert's previous excellent novel, Pavane, this one fails to create characters who can withstand the fascination built into the background, and they melt away like ghosts before this picture of British domination after the Nazi triumph. Alex Hamilton's "Words of Warning" is a British bit of weak-tea humor in which words begin to disappear from books, marching like little men accross the room and out the window in protest to their misuse by man. (Harrison may think this is SF, but in my book it's fantasy, in case anyone out there is fussy about such a distinction.)

Jonathan Ela's "From Sea to Shining Sea" comes in the form of a magazine article that points out how greed and folly pack more clout than conservational need; at best, a very mild bit of humor. "An Imaginary Journey to the Moon", written by a student in Ghana, Victor Sabah, is interesting for the view it offers American readers into the mind of a young person from a nation struggling to catch up with a world already breathless from trying to keep up itself. The display may be a valuable one, but I don't think it is valuable enough to warrant its publication here. And Howard L. Myers' "Out, Wit!" is so concerned with being a clever tale that it deflates its point about conservative close-mindedness.

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

In addition, there is a selection of cartoons and poems and a surprisingly valueless afterword by Brian Aldiss wherein he discounts the "trendy" SF stories (none of which he singles out except to mention in passing the film Silent Running, which was almost as flawed as Aldiss' memory of its plot) but offers only Philip K. Dick as an example of a writer of lasting value (yet doesn't bother to give much detail as to why).

To date this series has been lively and often full of surprises, and I simply can't explain the ineptitude of this year's edition. Maybe the editors ate some bad mushrooms, or were busy picking lint from their navels, or, horrors!, perhaps they were paid in advance? Whatever, I certainly hope it doesn't happen again.

* * * * * * *

Lester del Rey seems less incensed than Wollheim and less bitchy than Harrison, but he similarly concludes that the abundance of original anthologies is a bit too much and that "the result will be spotty at best". Del Rey's middle-of-the-road policy leads him to state that his choice of stories consists of "stories that entertain—but entertain at a very high level", while he rather conflictingly proclaims that "I have never read as little good short fiction in any given year since 1940."

Nearly half of del Rey's selections appear in other volumes—Silverberg's "When We Went to See the End of the World", Pohl and Kornbluth's "The Meeting", Lafferty's "Eurema's Dam", Vinge's "Long Shot", MacLennan's "Thus Love Betrays Us", Tiptree's "The Man Who Walked Home", and Ratsler's "Patron of the Arts" (the latter in the unrevises version).

The book's best story, and one sadly ignored by the other editors, is Thomas N. Scortia's "Woman's Rib", which tells of an aging scientist's obsession with immortality, and hits the heart not with sledgehammer blows but with the subtle penetration of a high-guage needle. A couple of good but hardly outstanding stories finish off the inadequate supply of passable material: Gordon Eklund's "Underbelly" is a study of immortality and death which examines an ordinary man under extraordinary conditions, and Jack C. Haldeman's "Watchdog" involves the reader emotionally with a great machine awaiting the return of man and gives him a solid punch of empathy as the machine struggles against loneliness and madness.

The remaining five stories are all losing entries. Larry Niven's "Cloak of Anarchy" is a preachy and flatly moralizing mess about educating the public, while Isaac Asimov's "The Greatest Asset" tries (and fails) to disguise its preachiness in a very thin fictional mold. Both stories are from ANALOG, the home of SF lectures posing as entertainment.

Donald Noakes' "The Long Silence" tries to brainwash us into believing that noisy crowds are stupid and that total silence will give them a chance to think clearly, a supposition the crowds accept in utter terror. No reader should be subjected to such foolishness, especially when he has to pay for it, but del Rey offers two more in the same vein. C. N. Gloeckner's "Miscount" is a half-wit joke about thieving aliens on the moon, and Robert L. Davis' "Teratochippus" disastrously mishandles an interesting idea—humans hitch a ride across a great ice tundra inside a giant alien beast—by shoveling in the sediment and ponderous dialogue in equally heavy measure.

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

Del Rey seems to me obsessed by stories that are geared to simple, one-dimensional ideas, a concern that overshadows the qualities of drama and good writing. This collection is stuffed to the brim with ideas, but as shown here they do not always make good stories, and del Rey's choices do not by any criteria (except his own) represent an acceptable sampling of the year's best.

* * * * * * *

Forrest J. Ackerman's collection would be immeasurably better if the publisher had discarded Ackerman's editorial trash. He echoes Harrison's comment, but as he is unable to write a clear sentence it appears as an example of his recurring carelessness: "an inordinate amount of science fiction nowadays is NOT science fiction". His complaint is obviously groundless, as he later refers to Robert Bloch's Hugo-winning fantasy short story, "The Hell-Bound Train" as "sf"—a term he randomly interchanges with SF, sci-fic, science fiction, sif—while his juvenile, perilously inane and vulgar attempts at humor are offensive to any intelligent audience, as well as non-instructive and harmful to younger and more naive readers.

The real tragedy of this editorial mess is that Ackerman has actually collected three quite good stories, none of which appear in rival volumes, and browsing potential buyers may reject the whole book if they read any of Ackerman's introductory idiocy.

Frederik Pohl's "The Merchants of Venus" is an exciting, old-fashioned adventure that borrows the intense character development characteristic of the so-called "new wave" and creates a well-rounded and fully developed hybrid that should appeal to almost every taste. The background, a scientifically plausible Venus, is perfect for the sense-of-wonder element desired by so many readers, here the discovery of alien tunnels and artifacts; yet the characters are rich and full-bodied, reacting to the setting and each other with very human motives that secure them as the plot focus.

Philip Jose Farmer is also rejecting stereotypes in the delightful "Seventy Years of Decpop", wherein the world must adjust to decreasing population caused by near-total world sterility. Farmer cleverly balances the world view with one man's assessment of the adjustment process, and finds a mix of gravity and humor that reflects the emotional well-being we will need to make our way through the complications of technological nightmare and social upheaval.

In "What We Learned from This Morning's Newspaper", Robert Silverberg takes a cliche concept and decorates it with slight aberrations that give it a totally different look. What initially seems to be just another fiction about people who try to grasp a profit by looking into the future takes a shift in observation that makes the concluding disaster both suspenseful and surprising.

Since these three stories account for over half the wordage I recommend the book to anyone who missed them before, in spite of my objections to much of the remaining material.

Of the rest only Thomas N. Scortia's "By the Time I Get to Phoenix" has much interest, and that comes mostly from the basic idea—a speculation on human-alien sex—which carries the reader piggyback over some obviously contrived plotting.

THE "BEST" ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

Norman Spinrad's "A Thing of Beauty" is a new twist on the old Brooklyn Bridge joke, only amusing if you're one of the ones who still laugh at Brooklyn Bridge jokes. Milton A. Rothman's "Getting Together" is a badly reasoned tale of a robot who becomes involved in human group therapy. Robert Bloch's "Forever and Amen" is a stale rehash of the-riches-man-in-the-world-seeks-immortality syndrome, almost totally without the needed suspense. "Ersatz Eternal" is as awful as the worst of A. E. van Vogt's previous efforts, making three men prisoners (for reasons unknown) of an eternal pseudo-world created by an unseen alien (for reasons unknown) in a story that has no point (for reasons known only to the author). The dialogue is as execrable as the non-plot, and Ackerman's choice of such drivel is indefensible (unless you consider the fact that Ackerman is van Vogt's agent?).

In addition there is the text of Frederik Pohl's 1972 LACon Guest of Honor speech, "The Shape of Science Fiction to Come", which is more of a good-hearted, optimistic and grateful thank-you science fiction's creators and supporters speech rather than a real exploration of the theme presented in the title.

I will only recommend the volume for those who haven't read the Pohl, Farmer and Silverberg stories. The rest of you are advised to avoid it like the black plague of editorial tastelessness that it is.

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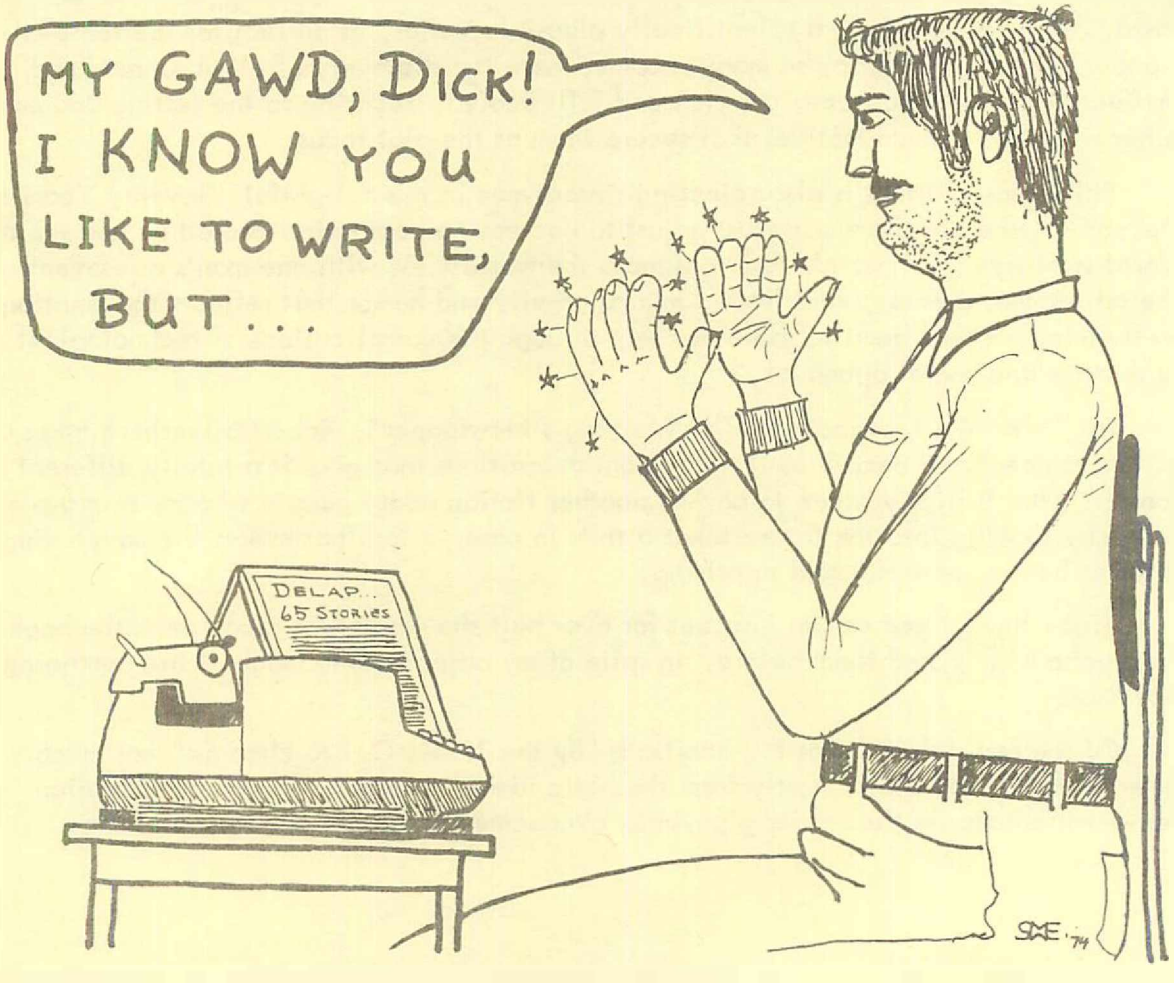


THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973

by: Richard Delap

1973 was, to put it bluntly, a bitch. It is difficult enough just to read all the volumes of original stories during a year, but it becomes a bother, an aggravation, and finally a reason for disgust when you write letter after letter to dinky publishing houses that publish one volume of SF, then refuse to tell you when their book was published, refuse to quote a price, refuse even to answer your inquiries.

The above reasons will explain to you why this column has been delayed for months. An optimist at heart, I kept hoping I could cover everything, but despite all my efforts I never could find out if Roger Elwood's Adrift In Space, published by Lerner, was a collection of original stories, or if Way Out, also edited by Elwood and published by Whitman, was actually published for sale or whether all copies had been permanently secreted in Whitman's Wisconsin warehouse. There may be other books published of which I am not aware—most likely more junk from the obstinate pig-brain of Roger Elwood, who has funneled a lot of money to SF writers but in general treats the genre as if it were the best way to waste paper and degrade talent—but I've now delayed this review for months and at last I've given up trying.

Following are thirty-three anthologies of 1973, some of them very much worth buying, others of which should be trashed without a moment's hesitation. The review concludes with a list of my choices of the anthologies' best and runner-up stories.

The Alien Condition, edited by Stephen Goldin (Ballantine 03212; $1.25; 206pp.)

Aside from a fine short story by Vonda McIntyre, and some passable ones by James Tiptree, Jr., Thomas Pickens, and Rachel Cosgrove Payes, Goldin's theme of exploring the minds and lives of alien beings did not produce much of worth. The majority of writers could not overcome their weak plots, the 'alienness' more often nonsense than imaginative speculation, and some of the writing (S. Kye Boult, Alan Dean Foster, Arthur Byron Cover) is simply too awful to be believed. A total of twelve stories, four of them good—meager pickings, in my estimation.

Androids, Time Machines and Blue Giraffes, edited by Roger Elwood and Vic Ghidalia (Follett; $6.95; 190pp.)
More Little Monsters, edited by Roger Elwood and Vic Ghidalia (Lancer 95235; 95¢; 190pp.)

I've lumped these two volumes together because they are primarily reprint anthologies, but include a few new stories. Androids. . . is an odd mixture of early work by Poe, de Maupassant and the like, that tries to hide the cobwebs with stories of more recent vintage by writers like Asimov and Clarke. The six new stories, with the exception of Robert Silverberg's "The Mutant Season", a simple but pleasant tale of the

THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

day the mutants come out of hiding, are unrelievedly atrocious. More Little Monsters is the same type of mix, eleven reprints which hit several literary lows but no highs, and two originals which are so crudely amateur it's embarrassing even to read them. If Elwood and Ghidalia have any value as an editorial team, it's only to warn readers that they've hit the bottom of the barrel and there's no place to go but up.

Astounding: John W. Campbell Memorial Anthology, edited by Harry Harrison (Random House; $7.95; 332 pp.)

Intended as a tribute to the late John Campbell, who was responsible for the nurturing of many of today's best-known science fiction writers, Astounding is a fairly good collection that one wishes had been quite a lot better. It tracks right down the middle between good and bad; and while Asimov, Bester, Clement, de Camp, Dickson, Simak and Cogswell have each contributed works that would comprise a quite readable issue of Campbell's magazine, there's not really even one memorable story among them. This will be out in paperback by the end of 1974 and I'd advise you to sample it before investing eight dollars in the hardcover, which is a high price to pay for a lukewarm tribute.

Bad Moon Rising, edited by Thomas M. Disch (Harper & Row; $6.95; 302 pp.)

Blurbed as "an anthology of political forebodings", Disch's collection represents, as he tells us in the introduction, "both kinds of politics, the ideal and the pragmatic." Some of Disch's choices are fine: Michael Moorcock's "An Apocalypse: Some Scenes from European Life" (incorporated into his novel Breakfast in the Ruins) and Disch's own "Everyday Life in the Later Roman Empire" (part of his excellent novel 334) are by far the best stories. There are some downers here as well, and there's enough of them to give this book a sort of grand guignol excessiveness that is sure to displease a number of fans. It's a good collection, but it's polemically ripe and heavy and hard to take in one lump sum. Try it, but like wine, a sip at a time.

Chains of the Sea, edited by Robert Silverberg (Thomas Nelson; $6.50; 221 pp.)

Collections of novellas have become very popular with readers over the past five years, and this "showcase for three of the most highly regarded of the newer writers: Geo. Alec Effinger, Gardner R. Dozois, and Gordon Eklund" is one of the best to yet appear. Eklund's "The Shrine of Sebastian" and Dozois' title story run away with most of the honors, Dozois' garnering a Hugo nomination for his work, but all of the stories are good ones, proving that the genre need not depend on reprints written by the superstars of yesterday, that new talent is with us now and needs only a chance to display the new wares. One of the year's best buys, sure to become a collector's item.

Children of Infinity: Original Science Fiction Stories for Young Readers, edited by Roger Elwood, illustrated by Jaqui Morgan (Franklin Watts; $5.95; 178 pp.)

Lester del Rey introduces this collection with minimal pandering and an obvious eagerness to let young readers know that SF stories are not only fun but "useful and

THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

valuable ways of training for the real, changing world." Del Rey's short essay will likely excite youngsters far more than the ten stories. Anderson, Malzberg, Scortia, and Raymond F. Jones contribute reasonably good pieces, but the rest are shoddy, gruesome bits of rubbish, ignorant of the sharp sensitivity of children and without any sort of literary merit. Give it only to a kid you hate.

Clarion III, edited by Robin Scott Wilson (Signet Q5503; 95¢; 224 pp.)

It looks as if this may be the last Clarion volume, as nothing is scheduled to appear in 1974. It will be a tragic loss, for the Clarion books have been an exciting showcase for new talent, as well as providing the reader with some insight into how established authors work with new writers and help them develop. The results are never exclusively good, but the series holds up remarkably well in comparison with books from the established veterans, and the successes are often like lightning bolts, unexpected and electric. (Weak sales, I suspect, would have more to do with Signet's poor covers than with the contents of the books.)

Demon Kind, edited by Roger Elwood (Avon 14886; 75¢; 192 pp.)

This is one of Elwood's better collections, a sequel to last year's reprint anthology, Young Demons, containing stories about children with strange powers. There are a few duds (by Lafferty, Holly, Spinrad, and McCaffrey), but they are more than offset by the good works of Malzberg, Farmer and Laurence Yep, the latter one of the best and most shockingly ignored of the new writers. What is really surprising about this book is the variety of approaches to the theme of strange children, no one story is quite like any other and the best ones are wondrously fresh and lively. A good book, and a bargain at 75 cents.

Eros In Orbit, edited by Joseph Elder (hardbound—Trident Press; $6.95; 189 pp.: paper—Pocket Books 77720; 1974; 95¢)

Elder has packaged an okay anthology that is not really as depressing or as anti-sexual as Mr. Elder's introduction would have you believe. When it comes to sex, however, the writers you expect to be impressive are often not as forthright as you'd hoped; while others (in this case, Pamela Sargent and Thomas Scortia) hop to it with incredible gusto. The collection does not adequately live up to its theme, but the good stories are well worth reading, and the paperback edition is reasonably priced.

An Exaltation of Stars: Transcendental Adventures In Science Fiction, edited by Terry Carr (hardbound—Simon and Schuster; $6.95; 191 pp.: paper—Pocket Books 77737; 1974; 95¢)

Carr has collected three novellas here, which range from the dismal (Robert Silverberg's "The Feast of St. Dionysus") to the adequate (Roger Zelazny's "Kjwalll'kje'k'koothailll'kje'k") to the superb (Edgar Pangborn's "My Brother Leopold"). The question behind these stories, as Carr explains, is "what might religion come to mean to us under new circumstances?" It is a question that offers

THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

a lot of room for SF writers, and the diversity of the three stories is satisfying, even if all the individual stories are not. Overall, a good collection that should satisfy most readers.

Flame Tree Planet: An Anthology of Religious Science Fantasy, edited by Roger Elwood (Concordia 2528; $1.35; 159 pp.)

Science fiction is the very last genre of fiction which should be pigeonholed by Christian bias, but that's exactly what Elwood has done in this book, which he introduces with a messy glop of half-truths, poor research, outright lies, and (I guess) 'faith'. The reader could ignore most of this if it weren't that most of the stories are equally steeped in pulpit-pounding and brainwashing. . . done, of course, with love and understanding, the same kind of love and understanding meted out by muggers, rapists, and other unsavory types. It's bad enough to be preached at, but when it's not even done well, it's too much to bear. Put this one directly into the trashbin.

Flashing Swords # 1, edited by Lin Carter (Nelson Doubleday and SF Book Club; $1.49; 175 pp.: paper—Dell 2640; 1973; 95¢)
Flashing Swords # 2, edited by Lin Carter (Nelson Doubleday and SF Book Club; $1.49; 200 pp.: paper—Dell 3123; 1974; 95¢)

Sword and sorcery fans will eat these two books up, what with names like Fritz Leiber, Poul Anderson, Jack Vance, and Michael Moorcock among the contributors. The stories range from good to poor, but the average is rather higher than one usually in S&S, none of the stories great, but a number of them lightly entertaining, energetic and pleasant. Fans of 'pure' SF will probably enjoy the first volume most, but those who really dig this sort of writing will probably like both.

Frontiers 1: Tomorrow's Alternatives, edited by Roger Elwood (hardbound—Macmillan; $5.95; 198 pp.: paper—Collier 01980; 1973; $1.50)
Frontiers 2: The New Mind, edited by Roger Elwood (hardbound—Macmillan; $5.95; 180 pp.: paper—Collier 01981; 1973; $1.50)

Macmillan published the paper editions of these anthologies concurrently with the hardcover editions, which would be a financial aid for fans if the volumes weren't so ordinary and uninspired that neither one is really worth buying. #1 has two fine stories by Barry Malzberg, plus a couple of fairly good items by Silverberg and Wolfe, with the remaining eight all wipeouts. #2 has three good items, by Lafferty, Effinger, and Jerry Sohl, with the other six again wipeouts. With paper editions now as high as $1.50, only fans with money to burn—does anybody have that stuff these days?—are going to continue wasting it on Elwood books put together with dollar signs rather than respect in mind.

Future City, edited by Roger Elwood (hardbound—Trident Press; $7.95; 256 pp.: paper—Pocket Books 77936; 1974; 95¢)

Mr. Elwood tells us that anthologies must have a raison d'être for existing today, that anthologies of a "potpourri design" are today no longer welcome (strange comment—

THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

I wonder if he's looked at the books he's turned out this year?). So this book is "an anthology that is created rather than packaged", we are told, and to that end we have nineteen stories, three bits of verse, a preface by the editor, a foreword by Clifford Simak, and an afterword by Frederik Pohl. Maybe my vision is topsy-turvy, but it still looks like a potpourri to me. Actually this is not really too bad a book, though the quality is as mixed as ever and I could find only two stories worthy of placing on my runners-up listing. Quite readable, however, and the 95 cent edition is a moderately good buy.

Future Quest, edited by Roger Elwood (Avon 16808; 95¢; 192 pp.)

Aside from a couple of mildly good stories by Malzberg and C. L. Grant, this turns out to be one of Elwood's worst collections, with some of SF's most respected names shoveling out garbage with a vengeance. Worst offender is Anne McCaffrey, who opens the book with "Dull Drums", an appropriately titled mess of clichés that writes down to young readers with dialogue like: "you can tell 'em to feck [sic] off." (I call it a poor method of catering to Elwood's much-publicized and basically senseless objection to the word "fuck".) Any teenager whose stomach doesn't turn over at that deserves to have nothing better to read.

Infinity Five, edited by Robert Hoskins (Lancer 75477; 95¢; 208 pp.)

With the folding of Lancer books, the Infinity series comes to an end. (Curtis Books was supposed to take it, but they folded as well, so it looks as if this series has had it.) #5 is not very successful, devoting nearly half its pages to a bumbled novella by Dean R. Koontz; but there are some passable works by Silverberg, Thurston, Carr, and Zebrowski, plus a three-page wowser by Scott Edelstein, giving the book a little bounce with its dying breath. I know of no series that has gone as far as five volumes without producing at least one less-than-inspired book; it's too bad Infinity had to exit on a bummer.

Monster Tales: Vampires, Werewolves, and Things, edited by Roger Elwood, illustrated by Franz Altschuler (Rand McNally; $3.95; 117 pp.)
Science Fiction Tales: Invaders, Creatures, and Alien Worlds, edited by Roger Elwood, illustrated by Rod Ruth (Rand McNally; $3.95; 124 pp.)

Each of these books is designed specifically for children, the first a minor but entertaining collection which demands little more of youngsters than that they be able to read adequately well, the second a much less pleasant book with stories so predigested they just lie on the pages like icky green goo. It's probably much easier to write horror stories for children, for science fiction demands an approach that must work explanations into the story structure without upsetting the dramatic content. The horror stories are for the most part rapid and lively, while the science fiction tales are depressingly dull and corny, even by children's standards (which require simplicity, but not idiocy).

New Dimensions 3, edited by Robert Silverberg (hardbound—Nelson Doubleday and SF Book Club; $1.49; 212 pp.: paper—Signet Q5805; 1974; 95¢)

THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

Silverberg's New Dimensions just gets better and better, this third volume a superior example of distinctive editing which contains several stories undoubtedly among the year's best. Doubleday has dropped the series, and it is only through the SF Book Club that one can buy the hardcover edition, a practice I hope the Club continues through future volumes. This one has eleven stories, of which I found only two to be less than satisfactory, making it one of the year's best buys, in either hardcover or paper. This one has every claim to be called the year's best original anthology.

No Mind of Man: Three Original Novellas of Science Fiction, edited by Robert Silverberg (Hawthorn; $5.95; 182 pp.)

Another collection of three novellas, including Terry Carr's "The Winds At Starmont", an action-adventure tale with a weak and watery philosophical content; Richard A. Lupoff's "The Partridge Project", about a probability-analyzing computer, told with catch-as-catch-can prose that skips between cool logic and old-pulps contrivance; and Robert Silverberg's "This Is the Road", which tells of future mutants in a predictable but adventurous story that is really much greater fun than its plot warrants. Not too satisfying as a total unit, but perhaps worth the money if you can find a paper edition later.

Nova 3, edited by Harry Harrison (Walker; $6.95; 243 pp.)

After the dreadful second volume of this series, Harrison has bounced back with a much better book, still not up to the quality of the first volume, but a well-rounded collection of thirteen stories, at least two of which are among the year's better works (by Aldiss and Malzberg) and several of more than nominal interest (Farmer, Sheckley, Edelstein, and others). Even the few stories I found less than good are more like misfires than bad writing. It's not a great collection, but it's certainly a far cry from the worst.

Omega, edited by Roger Elwood (hardbound—Walker; $6.95; 190 pp.: paper—Fawcett Gold Medal M3030; 1974; 95¢)

Not much in this one. Elwood is after 'name' writers again and doesn't seem to care much what they give him, while the new writers fill in the holes with tossoff items of equal disinterest. Five stories are at best readable (Farmer, Sutherland, Martin, Anderson, and Biggle), but even they have a fillup quality, like something rushed out to feed a hungry magazine at deadline time. I can't even recommend the paper edition of this one. Save your money.

Orbit 12, edited by Damon Knight (hardbound—Putnam; $5.95; 254 pp.: paper—Berkley Medallion 02409; 1974; 95¢)

The longest-running series in SF anthologies, Orbit again offers a wide variety of stories, some of which at least should appeal to almost any SF reader. Vonda McIntyre has a story, "The Genius Freaks", which has been almost totally ignored in favor of her other recent works, but I think it's one of her best and should be noticed.

THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

Fine stories by Le Guin, Wilhelm, and a very intersting cycle of tales by Brian Aldiss, plump out the volume to a hefty helping of science fictional mulligan stew. Competition is heavy this year, but Orbit should have no trouble holding its readers.

The Other Side of Tomorrow: Original Science Fiction Stories About Young People of the Future, edited by Roger Elwood, illustrated by Herbert Danska (Random House; $3.95; 207 pp.)

Young readers would be having an SF feast if it weren't that Elwood's anthologies are such a famine of content. This one features nine new stories, of which three (by Brackett, Green, and Holly) are at best tolerable items, with the rest, as usual, dredged up from the bottom of a slime-coated pit. The only conclusion I can reach after reading these books for 'young people', is that Elwood must actively hate children, must despise and deplore them, to continue offering them such yawn-inducing reading. Why on earth do the publishers keep buying this crap—are they that desperate?

Saving Worlds, edited by Roger Elwood and Virginia Kidd (hardbound—Doubleday; $6.95; 237 pp.: paper - under the title The Wounded Planet - Bantam Q7789; 1974; $1.25)

Ecological disaster!—what a peg on which to hang a cluster of SF stories! (Really original idea, huh?) Despite Frank Herbert's rather trite introduction ("increase your grasp on probabilities") and the presence of Elwood as one half of the editing team, this anthology is never as bad as one might expect. Gene Wolfe offers a couple of splendid stories (in a total of sixteen), and some verse by Tom Disch and D. M. Price proves to be among the best I've yet seen in an SF anthology. You may want to ignore the stories by van Vogt, Anderson, and two or three lesser-knowns, but the book is a surprisingly solid package with enough variation to please almost any reader.

Showcase, edited by Roger Elwood (Harper & Row; $5.95; 191 pp.)

This book is without question Elwood's best 1973 anthology, although it, too, is slightly marred by what seems to be an oddly random selection and ordering of stories. There are twelve in this collection, and while only three women are represented herein, they contribute by far the book's best works. Joanna Russ' "The Soul of a Servant" deals with social classes and offers a compassionate, insightful, other-side-of-the-coin look at Uncle Tom-ism. Raylyn Moore's "Trigononomy" is about a world-changer and is an intellectual's paradise crammed with speculative nuances that nibble away at deductive reasoning like lazy piranhas; while Carol Emshwiller's "The Childhood of the Human Hero" refracts morals in a twisting maze of moralistic fantasies. Silverberg, Lafferty, Malzberg, Green, and Wolfe also contribute some worthwhile items, and the book is one of the few worth buying in hardcover.

Ten Tomorrows, edited by Roger Elwood (Fawcett Gold Medal M2820; 95¢; 224 pp.)

Again a fitful selection of stories, ranging from a sharp little stinger by Pamela Sargent to an awkward play by James Blish to a pseudo-psychology vacuity by Anne

THE 'ORIGINAL' ANTHOLOGIES: 1973 (Continued)

McCaffrey (who in the past year has turned out more poor stories for Elwood than any one author should ever produce). Silverberg, Pangborn, and Niven offer some moderately good items, but the remainder are consistently tiresome, often trashy pieces that should never have been placed in print. It's a mediocre book, a very bad buy even at paperback prices.

Three Trips In Time and Space: Original Novellas of Science Fiction (hardbound—Hawthorn; $5.95; 193pp.: paper—Dell 8827; 1974; 95¢)

Three new novellas, and not a good one among them. Larry Niven's "Flash Crowd" once again plays around with 'displacement booth', and while the humor is occasionally funny, the plot has undernourished muscles and the final explanations come as too little and too late. John Brunner's "You'll Take the High Road" is an absurdist holiday that falls over inot low-comedy routines, the fast-clipped dialogue so sloppy that it eventually becomes droningly stale. Jack Vance's "Rumfuddle" has the author thumb-twiddling around a lot of loose ends to reach a climax so preposterously grotesque the reader is almost (but not quite) willing to forgive him the preceeding silliness. It might be possible to forgive one author for striking out, but all three? Naw, they shoulda all stood home in bed this game.

Two Views of Wonder, edited by Thomas N. Scortia and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (Ballantine 23713; $1.25; 271pp.)

Aha, a book with a new idea. The editors have presented six themes to six pairs of writers, one male and one female, hoping to find if there wer truly any detectable difference in the male and female approach to writing. Writing to a theme is not, I think, the best idea for an anthology, though some have managed to succeed fairly well with the method. It seems a necessity in this case, however, and while the result is not of consistent top quality, there are several good stories and a really excellent one by editor Yarbro. For $1.25, a pretty good investment.

Universe 3, edited by Terry Carr (Random House; $5.95; 209pp.)

Carr's anthology series has not had a very impressive history to date, and this third volume is equally disjointed and uneven. One can forgive quite a bit of mixed quality, however, when presented with stories like Gene Wolfe's "The Death of Doctor Island", a mind-bending fusion of sense-of-wonder and inner-space, and Gordon Eklund's "Free City Blues", about an eccentric female adventurer whose precipitant actions whirl her through a post-holocaust dazzle that will leave the reader exhausted but elated. The remaining five stories stack up as weak support, but the Wolfe and Eklund stories take up nearly half the book's pages, so I'll have to give this one a passing grade in spite of its deficiencies.

1973 SF/FANTASY MAGAZINE WRAP-UP

by Richard Delap

The magazines presented us with well over 300 new stories in 1973, not including the novels, and, as ever, they range from the very best to the very worst examples of fiction. Fifty-nine issues of the various titles were on sale, averaging just a shade over five new stories per issue, a wide spectrum which produced the longest runners-up list I've had in years. Individually, the magazines were as follows:

Amazing Stories and *Fantastic:*

For the first time in five years *Amazing* placed a story on my list of bests in addition to placing one story in the runners-up listing. *Fantastic* placed one runner-up story. From a total of less than fifty stories, this proves a mild showing for magazines with a decided penchant for weak short fiction.

As an editor, Ted White is prone to giving newcomers a chance at professional publication, but doesn't seem to have time to prod them into rewriting their stories—settling for boring page-fillers or failed experiments. The magazines still carry that flush of fanzine enthusiasm and interests, colorfully packaged and haphazardly presented, of surefire interest to confirmed fans, but perhaps less appealing to the general reader. Both magazines seem to be keeping afloat by this special appeal—the big question is whether White can withstand the tide of rising postal rates and poor newsstand distribution. Can he *afford* to be more discriminating? Perhaps not, but the coming year may prove to be the most challenging and eventually deciding one White has yet had to face. Lotsaluck, fella.

Analog:

Analog slips one story into the best listing and places three runners-up, from a total of nearly sixty stories, which doesn't seem too bad until one considers that the remainder of *Analog's* fiction weighs heavily on the debit side of the ledger. For all Bova's efforts to revitalize the magazine with a selection of different types of sf, sometimes controversial to the magazine's seemingly austere audience, the filler material remains much the same as that published in Campbell's final, trying years. Of course, one needs to consider the financial end of the matter, I suppose, for if *Analog* changes too drastically, the sales might begin to drop, and I doubt Conde Nast would sit still very long for that. Bova's efforts to improve the magazine seem slow-moving and very gradual, but perhaps in the end, this will work to swing *Analog* into prime-mover position once again. As ever, the magazine looks beautiful and features a steady supply of technically-oriented articles and pleasing features such as P. Schuyler Miller's always-good book column. As hard as this magazine is to take at times, I do think it's getting better. I just wish Bova could manage to speed up to more that a snail's pace in the improvement.

Fantasy and Science Fiction:

Since *F&SF* never publishes more than one novel a year, this leaves room for many more short stories (over ninety this year) and gives the magazine a greater chance of nabbing the majority of bests. But along with opportunity there must also be an editor with a talent for finding these stories and getting them into print. That *F&SF* places on the list with half of both the bests and runners-up is due to the remarkable abilities of Edward Ferman, the only editor who seems capable of regularly stealing away top-class material that the anthologists would dearly love to get for their "original" collections. How he does it, I don't know, but he has kept *F&SF* the unchallenged superior in the magazine field, plumping out each issue with Asimov's science column, Gahan Wilson's incomparable cartoons, a welcome film review column by Baird Searles, and the best book reviewers in the business. *F&SF* has been number one and it remains number one, unquestionably.

The Haunt of Horror:

There doesn't seem much point in discussing this magazine now, as it folded after two rather dismal issues with no stories worth remembering. The odd thing about the whole matter was that the publisher squashed the magazine before assessing its sales power by waiting for returns, and the last I heard, some unpublished material will be used in several sister publications that cater to the comics crowd. Don't look for reviews of it from me, however; I don't review the comics. *(Since Richard wrote this,*

Best SF/Fantasy Stories: 1973

selected by Richard Delap

Aldiss, Brian W.: "The Expensive Delicate Ship" (Nova 3)
Busby, F. M.: "Road Map" (Clarion III)
Eklund, Gordon: "The Shrine of Sebastian" (Chains of the Sea)
Le Guin, Ursula K.: "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (New Dimensions 3)
McIntyre, Vonda N.: "The Genius Freaks" (Orbit 12)
Moorcock, Michael: "An Apocalypse: Some Scenes from European Life" (Bad Moon Rising)
Pangborn, Edgar: "My Brother Leopold" (An Exaltation of Stars)
Russ, Joanna: "The Soul of a Servant" (Showcase)
Wolfe, Gene: "The Death of Doctor Island" (Universe 3)
Yarbro, Chelsea Quinn: "Un Bel Di" (Two Views of Wonder)

Runners-Up

Braly, Malcolm: "An Outline of History" (Bad Moon Rising)
Carr, Terry: "They Live on Levels" (New Dimensions 3)
Disch, Thomas M.: "Everyday Life in the Later Roman Empire" (Bad Moon Rising)
Dozois, Gardner R.: "Chains of the Sea" (Chains of the Sea)
Earls, William: "Bus Station" (Clarion III)
Edelstein, Scott: "Isaac Under Pressure" (Infinity Five)
Eklund, Gordon: "Free City Blues" (Universe 3)
Farmer, Philip Jose: "Monologue" (Demon Kind)
Koontz, Dean R.: "The Undercity" (Future City)
Lafferty, R. A.: "Days of Grass, Days of Straw" (New Dimensions 3)
Lafferty, R. A.: "The World As Will and Wallpaper" (Future City)
Le Guin, Ursula K.: "Direction of the Road" (Orbit 12)
Macfarlane, W.: "How Shall We Conquer?" (New Dimensions 3)
Malzberg, Barry N.: "Dreaming and Conversations: Two Rules by Which to Live" (Nova 3)
Malzberg, Barry N.: "Linkage" (Demon Kind)
Malzberg, Barry N.: "Those Wonderful Years" (Frontiers 1)
McIntyre, Vonda N.: "Wings" (The Alien Condition)
Moore, Raylyn: "Trigononomy" (Showcase)
Naylor, Charles: "We Are Dainty Little People" (Bad Moon Rising)
Nielsen, Lin: "When Pappy Isn't There" (Clarion III)
O'Donnell, K. M. (Barry Malzberg): "Getting Around" (Frontiers 1)
Sargent, Pamela: "Clone Sister" (Eros In Orbit)
Sargent, Pamela: "Matthew" (Ten Tomorrows)
Scortia, Thomas N.: "Flowering Narcissus" (Eros In Orbit)
Tiptree, Jr., James: "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (New Dimensions 3)
Wilhelm, Kate: "The Red Canary" (Orbit 12)
Wissner, Robert: "Say Goodbye to the World's Last Brothel" (Clarion III)
Wolfe, Gene: "An Article About Hunting" (Saving Worlds)
Wolfe, Gene: "Beautyland" (Saving Worlds)
Yep, Laurence: "The Eddystone Light" (Demon Kind)

Haunt of Horror *has been revived as one of Marvel's black and white magazines. The story quality is correspondingly lower*—WVP.)

Galaxy and *Worlds of If:*

A grand total of sixty-five new stories from both these magazines with three bests and ten runners-up between them, which is really an improvement over the past couple of years. Just as things are beginning to look up, with *Galaxy* once again returning to monthly publication, the magazines are pushed into another editorial flurry.

James Baen becomes editor of *If* at year's end, and, according to a telephone conversation I had with him some weeks back, much of the material he has on hand for 1974 sounds very promising indeed. Baen wants to get back to *science* fiction and is going to try very hard to push some big-name writers into producing it, while his enthusiasm is so infectious that I find myself really hoping he can pull it off. In addition, I have just heard that Baen will temporarily be editing *Galaxy* as well, for Ejler Jakobson has just announced his resignation. A time of changes can be uncomfortable and difficult, but one hopes it foretells yet more improvement. The features and reviews in both magazines are still on the mediocre side, however, and very little space is devoted to them. Fiction is the keynote here, and it seems to be getting better all the time. *(Most fans know by now of Jim Baen's announcement, at Discon II, that* Worlds of If *has been terminated. It was a surprise to all, including Jim. It's a shame; the magazine was improving every issue. Let's hope the publishers change their minds. Maybe a letter campaign?*—WVP)

Vertex:

With a total of five issues and thirty-nine new stories (the reprints in the initial issues appear to have been dropped for good), *Vertex* has started off with a resounding splash into a genre new to this publisher. The magazine is a big slick, overpriced at $1.50 an issue, with a heavy emphasis on art and a detrimental lack of emphasis on quality fiction. In fact, *Vertex* couldn't even place one runner-up story. Don Pfeil is editor of this gaudy botch and the illiteracy of so many of the stories hints that the man is really desperate for material or regards his as a group of half-wits who drool as they (try to) read. The most interesting feature of the magazine is a series of author interviews, few of which are depthful but all of which are strong selling-points to readers who want to know more about the man behind the typewriter (including how he looks, since all the interviews are photo-illustrated). To date, the interviews have all been with male authors, which by this time should be directing some complaints Pfeil's way. The science articles range from newspaper dryness to brisk condescension. As of the moment, *Vertex* looks like a financial success—whether it can hold a dedicated audience for much longer without improving its fiction content does not seem too likely.

Weird Tales:

Moskowitz's revival of the famous *Weird Tales* seems to have been welcomed by many readers, myself included. Unfortunately, it has not been accepting subscriptions and seems to have had very poor distribution, which bodes ill for its survival beyond a few issues (as of this writing, the Winter '73 issue is the last to have gone on sale and the magazine may already have been suspended). To date, the reprints have been the major focus of the fiction—only nine new stories were published, none of them very good—but Moskowitz's long article on William Hope Hodgson will delight readers who have missed such pieces from Moskowitz since his series of articles in *Amazing* some years ago. I can only say I hope the magazine can fight it through to survival.

Best SF/Fantasy Magazine Stories: 1973

Bishop, Michael: *Death and Designation Among the Asadi* (*F&SF,* February)
Busby, F. M.: *Cage a Man* (*F&SF,* September)
Claremont, C. S.: *Psimed* (*F&SF,* April)
Eklund, Gordon: *The Ascending Aye* (*Amazing,* January)
Ellison, Harlan: *The Deathbird* (*F&SF,* March)
Grant, C. L.: *Come Dance With Me On My Pony's Grave* (*F&SF,* July)
Le Guin, Ursula K.: *Field of Vision* (*Galaxy,* October)

McIntyre, Vonda N.: *Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand* (*Analog*, October)
Taves, Ernest: *Mayflower Three* (*Galaxy*, Jan.-Feb.)
Tiptree, Jr., James: *The Women Men Don't See* (*F&SF*, December)

Runners-up:

Aickman, Robert: *Pages from a Young Girl's Journal* (*F&SF*, February)
Bishop, Michael: *The White Otters of Childhood* (*F&SF*, July)
Boyd, John: *The Girl and the Dolphin* (*Galaxy*, March-April)
Bretnor, R.: *Old Uncle Tom Cobleigh and All* (*F&SF*, October)
Buck, Doris Pitkin: *Blackberry Winter* (*F&SF*, June)
Busby, F. M.: *The Learning of Eeshta* (*If*, Sept.-Oct.)
Butler, Chris G.: *A Coffin in Egypt* (*F&SF*, March)
Clarke, J. B.: *Six Men From Alpha* (*Galaxy*, March-April)
Cobb, C. G.: *Moonacy* (*F&SF*, December)
Green, Joseph: *Robustus Revisited* (*F&SF*, April)
Kelley, Leo P.: *Song* (*F&SF*, February)
Leiber, Fritz: *Cat Three* (*F&SF*, October).
Macfarlane, W.: *Quickening* (*Galaxy*, October)
McLaughlin, Dean: *To Walk With Thunder* (*Amazing*, August)
Myers, Howard L.: *Health Hazard* (*Analog*, January).
Pohl, Frederick: *In the Problem Pit* (*F&SF*, September)
Ross, Jim: *A Matter of Time* (*Fantastic*, November)
Schumack, Scott: *Persephone and Hades* (*Analog*, September)
Sheckley, Robert: *A Suppliant in Space* (*Galaxy*, November)
Sladek, John: *Solar Shoe-Salesman by Ph*l*p K. D*ck* (*F&SF*, March)
Stickgold, Bob: *Susie's Reality* (*If*, May-June)
Taves, Ernest: *Luna One* (*Galaxy*, July-August)
Taves, Ernest: *Mayflower Two* (*Galaxy*, November)
Wilhelm, Kate: *Whatever Happened to the Olmecs?* (*F&SF*, October)
Wilson, Gahan: *The Zombie Butler* (*F&SF*, March)
Wolfe, Gene: *How I Lost the Second World War and Helped Turn Back the German Invasion* (*Analog*, May)
Wolfe, Gene: *Westwind* (*If*, July-August)
Young, Robert F.: *The Giantess* (*F&SF*, July)
Young, Robert F.: *Girl Saturday* (*Galaxy*, May-June)

DEVILS, DEMONS, AND ASSORTED DAMNATIONS

A Review of 1973's Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films

by Richard Delap

Already acknowledged and noted as such by most fans and reviewers, 1973 was not a memorable year for filmed science fiction. Fantasy and horror movies, however, were numerous, seemingly sparked by the success of William Peter Blatty's novel *The Exorcist* and the attendant publicity over the film version released at year's end. The trend to horror was evident all year long, carried through unceasingly month after month, and causing a market glut that was impossible to ignore.

While the majority of horror films were the usual low-budget quickies ground out and sold with the screaming promotion and substandard quality of cheap hamburgers, there were yet several surprises along the way. It was those unexpected jewels that made the year a "horror" success in spite of the exploitation barrage, and hopefully it presages the emergence of a new group of directors who understand that horror is more than Technicolored blood-splashing and random gore.

1972's prizewinner at the Atlanta Film Festival, *Who Fears the Devil?*, from the book by Manly Wade Wellman, finally distribution through Jack H. Harris Enterprises. The title was changed to *The Legend*

of Hillbilly John, but the film proved to be a less than satisfactory fantasy, troubled by Melvin Levy's undisciplined script, mediocre actors hampered by poor film editing which left in amateurish pauses and dialogue gaps, and uninspired, budget-poor special effects.

The first two months of the year were crammed with a number of little pictures of little interest. Hallmark Releasing's *Last House on the Left* was a sickening mess of vulgarity and blood, yet audiences seemed to go wild for it and it made lots of money. Hallmark's followup, *Slaughter Hotel*—an Italian import formerly titled *Asylum Erotica*, with much of the sex cut to gain it an "R" rating—was reportedly more of the same, but I didn't bother to see it (once stung, twice shy, you know). The rest, none of which I have seen, line up as follows: Gamalex Associates' *House of Terror*; Hemisphere's *The Devil's Nightmare* and *In the Devil's Garden* (packaged together at year's end to cash in on the exorcism craze); Ellman Enterprises' *Alabama's Ghost*; Gemini's *Blood Orgy of the She-Devils*; Indepix Releasing's *Scream Bloody Murder*; Premier Productions' *Private Parts* (Premier is a subsidiary of MGM, which uses this moniker for decidedly offbeat or "X"-rated films); Independent International's *Blood of Ghastly Horror*; Film Ventures International's *When Women Had Tails* and *Love Factor* (two semi-sf features), Cannon's *Silent Night, Bloody Night* (formerly titled *Zora* and starring Patrick O'Neal and John Carradine); Boxoffice International's *The Virgins and the Vampires*; and Jack H. Harris Enterprises' *Hungry Wives* (a reportedly mediocre witchcraft drama from the director of the "underground classic", *Night of the Living Dead*).

The major companies as well turned out a number of small films that died quietly at the boxoffice. Columbia's *The Creeping Flesh* was director Freddie Francis' latest from Britain, starring Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, with the usual Victorian setting and a story about a mad scientist trying to develop an antidote for evil. Columbia's *A Reflection of Fear* was another in the ever-flowing stream of psycho-horror dramas, and despite the presence of a fine cast — Robert Shaw, Sally Kellerman, Mary Ure, and Sondra Locke — it dawdled along much too placidly to a predestined conclusion. Cinerama released two pictures directed by Bernard Girard, who showed some promise with Hollywood pictures like *Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round* several years ago but was sadly never given a chance to develop. I have been unable to find any information of the first, *The Mind Snatchers*, but the second, *A Name for Evil*, was based on a 1947 novel by Andrew Lytle (reprinted a few years ago as an Avon paperback) and starred Robert Culp and Samantha Eggar. The film was made in Canada—which provided some inconguous mountains for the Louisiana setting—and the plot was a disastrously muddied swamp of corny domestic melodrama and ghost story, neither of which concluded with much sense.

MGM's *Slither* was an amusing comedy that for most of its length seemed to have a strange element of fantasy interwoven with its skullduggery plot. While the fantasy didn't pan out as such, the film had a surrealistic quality that made the film strangely unclassifiable. The tight, witty script and extravagant visual humor was carried off very well by an enthusiastic cast (James Caan, Peter Boyle and, especially, Sally Kellerman) who seemed to joy in the film's hectic absurdity.

In the spring Columbia released its multi-million dollar musical remake of James Hilton's fantasy, *Lost Horizon*, but Burt Bacharach's muzak songs, an oversudsed script and Ross Hunter's glossy but blank production values had audiences wishing the whole mess had been left to rot in Shangri-La.

The moppet trade was given a big sales campaign to interest them in Paramount's *Charlotte's Web*, but this Hanna-Barbara cartoon fantasy, based on the popular E. B. White novel, couldn't muster the interest that Disney productions receive. The book, though long a children's favorite, was given filmic good humor which was marred by unimaginative and often shamelessly derivative animation techniques. The voices, with Debbie Reynolds as a marvelous Charlotte and Paul Lynde almost perfect as the greedy cat, were at all times superior to the sappy songs and uneven script.

On the other side of the tracks adult audiences were given an equally outrageous fantasy, the hard-core pornofilm *The Devil in Miss Jones*. Like Linda Lovelace of *Deep Throat* fame, Georgina Spelvin became almost a household name after audiences turned on to her now-famed suicide and snake sequences in this film. (On the way to Torcon, I had the opportunity to see this in Chicago, and ended up instead having an expensive meal at a restaurant specializing in cheese dinners and located right across the street from the theatre showing the Spelvin opus. To this day I wonder if I'd rather have seen Spelvin and the snake rather than eat cheese. I suppose now that the Supreme Court decision has cleared hard-core out from my home town, I'll never know.)

Cinerama's *The Vault of Horror* was the second multi-episode horror drama drawn from stories originally published in the EC comics, and like the first film each sequence was so predictable that viewers could recite every line of dialogue right along with the cast. Glynis John and Terry-Thomas had the best of weak material in a mildly amusing sequence about a bachelor-turned-husband whose wife is not quite up to his demands for neatness; but the remaining four episodes, despite good casts, are flat

and lifeless items that plod along as contrivedly as the insipid interconnecting episode about five men in an elevator descending to a graveyard. This was directed by Roy Ward Baker, as was a second film from Cinerama, *And Now the Screaming Starts*, and Baker's desultory pace kept this one from getting off the ground as well. Based on David Case's novel, *Fengriffin*, the story is about a family curse visited on virgin brides, but even the presence of talented Peter Cushing couldn't offset the dawdling script.

American International Pictures (AIP) picked up a couple of films from independent producers about this time. The first, a Canadian-made exploitation item titled *Cannibal Girls*, was as cheapjack as its title indicates, only terrifying if you are terrified by scenes of young ladies chewing on pieces of bloody meat purported to be human flesh (looked more like rubbery beef liver to me). A very silly picture, more funny than frightening.

The sad part about AIP's advertising campaigns is that you can't tell a class picture from a trash picture, and while the ads for Brian de Palma's *Sisters* weren't as blood-oriented as those for *Cannibal Girls*, they gave little indication of the superb quality of this low-budget but very high-polish Hitchcock pastiche. De Palma's story, scripted by himself and Louisa Rose, centers around a young woman whose one-night romantic involvement with a man she's met on a television quiz show leads to his grisly stabbing murder, likely the most shockingly violent and terrifying murder scene since *Psycho's* famous shower. The death seems to be the work of the woman's sister (the two are surgically separated Siamese twins), who remains unseen but occasionally heard off-camera. When a lady reporter sees the murder from a nearby window, the story takes on a tension-filled development as the reporter seeks police aid, soon finding all evidence of the crime has disappeared and she also in danger, her knowledge of the murder marking her as the next victim of the psychotic sister. The story is not a particularly outstanding one, but de Palma's treatment is so refined and expert that it simply doesn't matter. The murder scenes are blood-curdling, the film editing crisp and exciting (with the best use of split-screen I've yet seen), and the suspense buildup unbelievedly heightened by Bernard Herrman's fantastic musical score. Performances as well are very fine, bringing sharp control to a script that, as in Hitchcock films, spins between high humor and high horror at a dizzying rate. Top-notch filmmaking, certainly one of the better suspense items in recent years.

Vincent Price, who seems to be enjoying his films more since he's allowed to play for as many laughs as chills, gives a double-dose of both in United Artist's *Theatre of Blood*. This time he's a totally mad, totally bad Shakespearian actor who takes out his vengeance on the critics who have ignored him when voting their annual awards. One by one he knocks them off, each death procedure drawn from one of the Great Bard's works, with the deaths as grim as they are ironically amusing. Price is delightful—well, hell, he's delightful even in bad films, and he's certainly made plenty of those—as is Diana Rigg as his daughter; and while the film is clearly no classic it's a fast-paced bit of fluff that light-hearted (so to speak) sadistic fun.

There was another lineup of "B" films to pad out the bottom half of double-bills or fill the smallest sections of all those new fourplex theatres around the country: Cambist's *The Crazies* (title later changed to *Code Name Trixie* when George "Night of the Living Dead" Romero's film about a virus-bred madness didn't repeat the previous success); Cannon's *I, Monster*; Horizon Film's *Miss Leslie's Dolls* and *Zaat*; Film Ventures International's *Legend of Blood Castle*; Cinemation's *The Night God Screamed*; Buena Vista's *Charley and the Angel* (a Disney feature, not one of the better ones); and MGM's *Wicked, Wicked* (a very poor psycho-murder drama featuring split-screen techniques and music from *Phantom of the Opera*, both of which were ineptly utilized).

John Landis, who wrote, directed and starred in *Schlock*, a nostalgic horror-comedy about the missing link, had plenty to brag about after his film won the Golden Asteroid top prize at the Trieste Science Fiction Film Festival last July. The film received only lukewarm reviews in the U.S., however, and distribution by Jack H. Harris Enterprises has been so poor that only a few west coast communities have seen it to date.

The first big sf film of the year was MGM's *Soylent Green*, adapted from Harry Harrison's tight and bitter novel, *Make Room! Make Room!* into a loose and senseless screenplay by Stanley R. Greenberg. The opening premise is similar to Harrison's – the murder of an industrialist leads an investigating detective on a challenging trail through the overpopulated and degenerating hell of New York City, circa 2022. But where Harrison's novel was a tense manhunt trailing through riots, hysterical crowds and shocking food shortages (not to mention a host of very interesting characters who lived in this depressing world as if they really belonged there), the film version used only little snippets of the book and fabricated a silly mishmash of "furniture" girls (live-in prostitutes), underpopulated crowd scenes, and (eek! gasp!) food wafers made from the bodies of the dead. We got a nice performance from the late

Edward G. Robinson in a supporting role, but the rest of the cast (Charlton Heston, Leigh Taylor-Young, Chuck Conners, Joseph Cotton) didn't seem much interested, though with that dreadful script one can hardly blame them. Richard Fleisher's direction is awful — his action scenes have no energy and his quiet scenes fade away altogether. It's easy to complain about a film that aborts the fine material on which it is based; but *Soylent Green* is worse than that. It is simply bad filmmaking. The knowledge that the film was heavily promoted and made lots of money only makes the matter that much more unbearable.

MGM also had *The Mutation* scheduled for release, but the folding of MGM as a distribution outlet during the summer cancelled this British-made sf horror drama, and I read that Columbia has taken the film for 1974.

With a proposed television series in the near future, the 20th Century-Fox "Apes" series drags to a slow close with *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*, in which the original characters by Pierre Boulle have carelessly been reduced to distant cardboard relatives, down to the last fake hair on their chinny chin-chins. Roddy McDowall is the only actor to carry through to this last feature, but a weary script by John William and Joyce Hooper Corrington and J. Lee Thompson's torpid direction leave him no more than a simpleminded monkey. Good riddance to a craze that far outlived its filmic worth.

Cinerama's British import, *Terror in the Wax Museum*, boasts a terrific cast — Ray Milland, Broderick Crawford, Maurice Evans, Elsa Lanchester, John Carradine, Shani Wallis — that is enough to make any moviegoer's mouth water. Sadly the only watering mouths are those of the actors, dribbling and spluttering over some of the most atrocious dialogue ever to make its way to the screen. The plot is yet one more retread of the familiar murders-in-the-museum syndrome, but the actors who play the wax museum dummies flutter and move very noticeably — a blessing in this case as it distracts the viewer from a script that is too bad to be funny. This kind of filmmaking is shameful and, worse, insulting.

The same problem was present in 20th Century-Fox's *The Neptune Factor*, in which a decent cast is dragged through two hours of inane dialogue and cheapjack special effects, all resulting in damned little suspense and fidgety nervous laughs that merely make the audience realize how silly and incredibly boring the whole mess really is. Fox had better lick, both commercially and artistically, with the film adaptation of a Richard Matheson horror novel, *The Legend of Hell House*. This was James H. Nicholson's first picture away from AIP (after years producing with Samuel Z. Arkoff), and also his last, for he died just as the picture was going into release. Very sad, for Nicholson managed to pump more class into this film than any he ever made for AIP. Matheson adapted his own work into screenplay form and John Hough directed with the emphasis on slow-mounting tension as a small group of people seek to learn the secret of a "haunted" house in which incarnate evil crawls through every floorboard. The film builds very well indeed to some quite frightening scenes (including one of the strangest rape scenes ever filmed, in which Pamela Franklin is assaulted by a "ghost"); but the film falls down very badly in the end, as did the novel, with a splashy but unfortunately preposterous explanation for all the weird goings-on.

AIP continued a relatively slow year for horror and sf films, concentrating more on action and sex melodramas. For the summer AIP released the sequel *Scream, Blacula, Scream* (titled *Blacula II* during production), to last year's surprise hit, *Blacula*, but this second film didn't equal the success of the first, and it disappeared before I had a chance to see it. I wish I could say I had also missed *Raw Meat*, another British import, but I caught it on the lower half of a double-bill at the drive-in, and stuck it out because I admire the talent of Donald Pleasance. The vague plot is a lamebrained notion about a group of cannibalistic humans living in abandoned London subway tunnels and sneaking out on occasion to grab some bloody fresh victims. The film was so dark that drive-in viewing made it impossible to see what was going on most of the time, for which I think I should be grateful considering that what I could see was unrelievedly awful.

Universal released a double-bill during the summer, of which the top feature, *Sssssss*, was a welcome surprise. The plot is formula stuff — a mad scientist is experimenting with snakes in hopes of crossing them with humans to create a race that will survive the collapse he sees approaching from man's environmental destruction — but Hal Dresner's script lovingly harkens back to the old-time thrillers that kept a keen balance between the serious and the silly and succeeded in making the movie fun in spite of its contrived nature. There are some fine scenes done with real snakes, including a chilling one in which a man is bitten in a shower stall by a black mamba, and John "Apes" Chamber's make-up for the metamorphosed human-to-snake creatures is extraordinarily good for a low-budget programmer. The co-feature, *The Boy Who Cried Werewolf*, is less good and looks as if it were made for television rather theatre showings (too many close-ups and stark color schemes in all the interiors).

Warner Bros. imported the British-made *O Lucky Man!*, which contained a few scenes of surrealistic fantasy but is another which is difficult to classify. It was, however, a very good film, with a snappy song score and some of the funniest dialogue I've heard all year. Worth seeing for fantasy fans, even if it doesn't quite classify.

Another batch of small pictures, some of which may still be playing throughout the country for the next year or so, rounds out the summer: Hampton International's *Naked Evil*; New Yorker's *Jonathan* (a German-made vampire story that has received some of the strangest reviews I've seen on a horror film but hasn't had much playoff yet); Cinepix' *Sensuous Sorceress*; Entertainment Ventures' *The Flesh and Blood Show* ("R"-rated junk from a company that usually specializes in "X"-rated junk); MGM's *Trader Horn* (a very cheap, unbelievably bad remake of a quasi-fantasy jungle adventure); Howco International's *The Legend of Boggy Creek* (a semi-fiction semi-documentary filmed in Arkansas, if you can believe that); Centaur Releasing's *Invasion of the Bee Girls* (high sex, low sf); Film Productions' *Legacy of Satan* and *Blood* (two rock-bottom cheapies from Gerard Damiano, director of *Deep Throat*); K-Tel's *Mister Superinvisible*; Playboy/Universal's *The Naked Ape* (Desmond Morris should sue!); and Unisphere's *The Bride*.

Avco-Embassy's *Nightwatch*, based on Lucille Fletcher's play which was full of more holes than a slice of swiss cheese, was a lushly produced film that couldn't plug the holes up with any more mayonaisse dressing. Elizabeth Taylor has every inflection of the harried heroine role down pat by this time, and she's given class-A assistance by the late Laurence Harvey and Billie Whitelaw in this convoluted but basically quite shallow horror-mystery. Nice to look at but not much to think about.

Going out of the business with a film that almost didn't get produced at all (if you believe author-director Michael Crichton's introduction to the Bantam paperback printing of his screenplay), MGM gave *Westworld* a clever promotional campaign that helped turn this relatively low-budget sf drama into a money machine. The title indicates one section of a huge and expensive resort playground for the monied class, where the excitement of bygone glories (the wild west, Roman decadence, or medieval splendor) is recreated with intricately programmed robots and elaborate settings. The robots go haywire and fake gunfights (or swordplay, or whatever) turn into real battles in which the human visitors die off quickly — except, of course, for the main character, a clumsy and rather stupid businessman, played in a slightly bored manner by Richard Benjamin. The special effects work was sometimes very clever, and Yul Brynner's stalking gunfighter has a menace that comes across very well. The good moments, however, are much too infrequent and the remainder is so trite, with endless chatter that doesn't progress the plot by even a millimeter, that any sf fan is bound to be saddened to see such workable potential reduced by bad editing to throwaway trivia. It's like re-reading all those old pulp magazines and seeing terrific ideas demolished by inept writers who played formula then played out as nobodies. Very sad.

MGM had one more film scheduled, *Nightmare Honeymoon*, but it never got into release under the MGM moniker, and may appear next year from United Artists (unless it ends up sold directly to television, a strong possibility).

Paramount's *Tales That Witness Madness* is yet another multi-episode thriller from England. Written by Jay Fairbank — a psuedonym for actress Jennifer Jayne, according to *Variety* — the film recounts the stories of four inmates of a mental institution, each one a bit sillier that the one before, until we reach the concluding episode featuring a pudgy Kim Novak (her worst acting ever in an already undistinguished career) as a middleaged (?) mother of a teenage (??) daughter who ends up a virgin (???) sacrifice, her flesh served to guests invited to the mother's backyard luau. Production values are good, but the director is again film hackmaster Freddie Francis, and if the script doesn't work Francis is the least likely one to cover it.

Cinerama's *Doctor Death: Seeker of Souls* received a couple of passable reviews from the trade press, but I haven't seen a trace of it anywhere (must be still hiding out in the small towns, where audiences aren't so demanding?). Capital's *Luana*, another jungle fantasy about a young female Tarzan-like character, had a quick playoff here and I missed it also (you can read a novelization written by Alan Dean Foster and published by Ballantine is you're a sucker for this kind of thrill). Cinerama's *Arnold* is a horror-suspense-comedy that's doing big business in the boonies but is reportedly even worse than you could expect. And Cinerama's *The Pyx* is yet another Canadian-made feature, with the added box-office draw of Karen Black in the role of a prostitute whose downhill ride on sex and drugs turns deadly when she becomes involved with a satan-worshipping cult. The film is an uneven mixture, marred by aimless sequences that try to mask a thin plot, but at times interesting for the nifty performances of Black and Christopher Plummer and a stimulating use of the flashback (a difficult technique that receives good treatment here). Another notable asset is a striking medley of songs which Miss Black sings in the background. Sometimes clever, sometimes dull, it just misses being a good picture.

Once more, near year's end, a bumper crop of also-rans: Cinemation's *Hunchback of the Morgue;* Hallmark Releasing's *Don't Look in the Basement*; 20th Century-Fox's *Hex* (which has been so elusive that even the trade press is wondering what happened to it); Paragon's *The Horrible Sexy Vampire*; Entertainment Pyramid's *Grave of the Vampire*; Media Cinema's *The Killing Kind*; (starring Ann Southern and Ruth Roman, directed by horror-suspense expert Curtis Harrington, and shown at last year's Cannes Film Festival but getting a very slow, sparse playoff in the U.S.); AIP's *Thriller* (another that seems to have disappeared altogether); Sunset International's *Terror On Half Moon Street*; Unisphere's *The House That Cried Murder*; Joseph Green's *Blade*; Diplomat's *The Werewolf of Washington* (a comedy set in the D.C. area, but the Watergate scandals seem to be hurting rather than helping business on this one); Paramount's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* (perhaps one of the most publicized fantasies in years and certainly one of the biggest busts moneywise since the book's popularity didn't carry over to film audiences); and Film-Makers International's *The Clones* (sf's latest "in" theme, and film which seemed to play every area around the country except mine *sigh*).

The Christmas holidays always brings a flux of "big" films, and this year was no exception. The remarkable part of it was that there were five films of a fantasy or sf slant all within the space of a month, several of them getting the blockbuster type of business that comes along very seldom these days.

Warner Bros.' *The Exorcist* hit like a hurricane, and, as I write this in late spring, the high winds are still blowing a multitude of greenbacks in that studio's direction. William Peter Blatty collected an Oscar for his screen treatment of his own bestselling novel, and the sound technicians were awarded for the superb dubbing that helped the film achieve some of its spectacular aural (not to mention visual) effects.

What is so disheartening about this phenomenon is that none of the people involved in this project (except perhaps the special effects crew) deserved any more than passing mention. Blatty's novel, which was easily seen merely to be a novelized screenplay from the beginning, was a shallow, poorly-written jumble of pretentious religious assertions and flakey characters who are so crudely motivated by Blatty's reach for shock effect that they can never take on motivations of their own.

The shocks are translated to the screen as violently as possible, with young Regan, an actress's daughter who becomes possessed by a demon, spewing a stream of obscenities, engaging in acts of self- degredation, and becoming the agent by which all the other characters confront their own weaknesses. Watching the poor girl vomit, masturbate, and change from a pretty young thing to a vile and hideous monster is probably the cinematic peak of make-up artistry, but this kind of impact can carry a movie only to a visual highpoint. A film that lacks quality in every other aspect is going to have problems being remembered as more than a momentary thrill. *The Exorcist* will, I believe, be rapidly relegated to no more than a cursory footnote in motion picture history.

Far more successful artistically, despite poor boxoffice response, is Paramount's *Don't Look Now*, director Nicolas Roeg's assertion that crudity is hardly necessary to provide chills in the horror genre. Smoothly adapted from a workaday Daphne du Maurier short story, Allan Scott and Chris Bryant's screenplay builds the suspense of psychic horror through a cast of characters that reacts believably to the terrors which mount around them toward an incredible pitch. Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie deliver polished, cunning performances as a young British couple who have lost their daughter in a tragic drowning accident. While in Venice they meet two sisters, one of whom is a psychic and warns them that they should leave, for danger awaits them in this city. The question is — from where does the danger come? From the sisters themselves? From the visions of his dead daughter that the husband sees scampering through the dark and dingy canals of wintertime Venice? From the wife? The red herrings are almost entirely visual, and Roeg, himself an expert cinematographer, ties the dramatic elements together in visual symbolisms that are delicately crafted and quite possibly the finest example of such symbols ever put on film. By all accounts one of the year's very best films, and one not to be missed.

United Artists' *Sleeper* is another Woody Allen extravaganza that qualifies as science fiction, for in it Allen is revived in the future after 200 years of cryonics storage (wrapped in tin foil, no less!). Hunted as a renegade by the regulatory government, Allen rushes here and there through a series of escapades that range from hilarious slapstick to frenetic and slapdash verbal humor that slides between literary witticisms and desperate corn with blundering unease. The film has been very popular with both sf fans and general viewers, but it has exactly the same faults that seem to mar all of Allen's feature films — the frenzied pace can only continue so long as the dialogue remains at a stable highpoint, and the dialogue in this film has a tendency to slow to a crawl between the inspired buts of humor. Granted the film has some terrifically funny moments — Allen trying to steal a giant banana, Allen and Diane Keaton in a "sex machine" — but the fun isn't sustained very well, and the picture sinks to the flat tire stage more often than not.

Avco-Embassy's *The Day of the Dolphin* is one of those saddening films that you want to like very much and end up not liking much at all. The problems again are with the plot, in which a slow-moving but mildly entertaining tale of a scientist who has made verbal contact with dolphins shifts to an idiotic cloak-and-dagger melodrama in which evil corporate bigwigs use the innocent dolphins in a plan to assassinate the President of the United States. The sinister-doings angle is tepid and destructive, but the film is such a visual treat – director Mike Nichols uses every opportunity to show off the engaging dolphins skimming through the clear blue waters with extraordinary grace, the sense of lovely freedom intensified by George Delerue's hauntingly beautiful music score – that most viewers will be satisfied if they just ignore the story and let their eyes revel in the visual pleasures.

Roger Corman (who once helmed all those Edgar Allan Poe things for AIP) has formed his own company, New World Pictures, which specializes in hard action pictures for saturation bookings around the country. He's made enough money from these programmers to invest in more worthwhile projects, first by importing Ingmar Bergman's excellent *Cries and Whispers*, and now by purchasing the U.S. release rights to a French-Czechoslovokian co-produced animated fantasy, *Fantastic Planet* (La Planete Sauvage). Adapted by Rene Laloux (who also directed) and Roland Topor (who designed the visual graphics) from a novel by Stefan Wul (unpublished in the U.S. to my knowledge), the film utilizes a simplistic sf concept in which humans (Oms) are kept as pets by the blue giants (Dagues) of a faraway world. There are wild Oms, too, who live in burrows and fight to survive the carnivorous beasts and plants of this weird planet; and the hero, who is the special pet of a young female giant, runs away to join them, stealing an educational headphone from his master, a device by which the wild Oms gain the needed information to escape and find a world of their own. It's old-fashioned science fiction for anyone with more than neofan knowledge of the genre, but it's good old-fashioned sf, actionful, exciting, bristling with throwaway concepts. The animation is refreshingly different from the Disney-smooth techniques American audiences are accustomed to seeing, the "limited" animation techniques used to distinct advantage, the drawing rough and somewhat hard-edged but not crude, and the muted colors exceptionally fitting. It would be nice to see this same group tackle sf on a more challenging level, but in the meantime this one serves very nicely indeed and is a pleasant, diverting entertainment.

And that's it for 1973. It will be interesting to see if science fiction holds its own in the coming sf award presentation, or if the voters decide to broaden the interpretation of the term "sf" to include some of the superior fantasy films which far outrank the year's science fiction. At the moment the year's strongest contenders seem to be *Soylent Green, Sisters, The Legend of Hell House, Westworld, Sssssss, The Day of the Dolphin, Don't Look Now, The Exorcist, Sleeper*, and *Fantastic Planet*. And if I'm not mistaken, it looks to be a very tough race indeed.

SCIENCE FICTION IN GERMANY IN 1973

by Frank Flügge

1. *Clubs.*

In 1970, before the world con in Heidelberg, the AST (*A*rbeitsgemeinschaft *S*pekulative *T*hematik) was founded. This is a work group which is interested in sociological SF, and publishes one of the most famous German SF magazines: SCIENCE FICTION TIMES.

At the beginning of 1973, a special new group, the AFPSF (*A*rbeitskreis *f*ür *p*olitische *S*cience *F*iction), entered the scene. Their stated aims were the analysis of the correlation between politics (Marxism!) and SF, and the promotion of political SF.

Actually, efforts to found the AFPSF began in July, 1972, when they tried to organize themselves, and started publishing an internal discussion magazine called *Inter Nos*. But the real breakthrough occurred in January, 1973, with the publication of their long-awaited magazine, *Zeitgeist* (this was available to non-members as well as members).

At the same time as *Zeitgeist* was published, however, controversies developed among the members, and a few weeks later the group's leaders--Kurt Sterz and Jürgen Elsässer--abandoned the AFPSF. The members who were left tried to save the remnants of their organization. In August (Jürgen Elsässer had returned to the group), in one last attempt to rebel, they adopted a new name: SASL (*S*ozialistischer *A*rbeitskreis *S*pekulative *L*iteratur). Today the AFPSF (or SASL) is nearly forgotten.

2. *Conventions.*

August, 1973 was also the month for the 18th annual convention of the SFCD (*S*cience *F*iction *C*lub *Deutschland*), which was held in Ulm. It was well covered by the press, a rarity in Germany. (Contrary to the situation in the Anglo-American countries, where SF clubs are much better known to the general public, in Germany SF fans live on the shady side of the public interest--and it's always a unique event when the German press pays any attention to German SF activities.)

To give you an idea of what German fans like, I'll list some of the results of the 1972 fanpoll.

Best German Book of 1972: *Einstein's Erben*, by Herbert W. Franke. 2nd, *Mutantenmilieu*, by Uwe Brankner; 3rd, *Schule der Atheisten*, by Arno Schmidt.

Best Foreign Book of 1972: *The Martian Chronicles*, by Ray Bradbury. 2nd, *Solaris*, by Stanislaw Lem; 3rd, *Nacht und Schimmel*, by Stanislaw Lem.

Best Film of 1972: *Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick). 2nd, *Slaughterhouse Five* (George Roy Hill); 3rd, *Andromeda* (Robert Wise).

Best Fanzine of 1972: (I'll list all 10 places, since these fanzines may be known to you through Don Miller's reviews of most of them in SOTWJ) 1, *Quarber Merkur*; 2, *Science Fiction Times*; 3, *Andromeda* (SFCD clubzine); 4, *Andro-Nachrichten* (SFCD clubzine); 5, *Magira* (FOLLOW zine); 6, *Alpha*; 7, *Munich Round Up* (U.S. Agent, Andrew Porter); 8, *Story Center* (SFCD story mag); 9, *Tellus International* (SFCD fanzine in English); 10, *Fanews.*

Other categories were: Best Fan Artist, Best Fan Author, Best Music, Best Professional Graphics, and Best Radio Play.

Another convention of note was the comic-con in Berlin. It was held at Easter, and was a disaster, financially and programwise, for the INCOS (*I*nteressengemeinschaft *Co*mic *S*trip), who had organized the con. The GoH was supposed to be the most famous German comic artist, Hans-Rudi Wäscher (one might say the German comic scene originated with Wäscher some decades ago, with such series of his as *Ivanhoe, Sigurd, Lancelot, Marco Polo*, etc.). But Wäscher was only in the convention hall for a few hours, and Stan Lee didn't show up at all.

A third major convention was the "Fest der Fantasie", the annual FOLLOW convention (FOLLOW= *F*ellowship *o*f the *L*ords *o*f *W*onder, the German Fantasy & Sword-and-Sorcery club). The con was probably no different than S&S cons in the U.S., so I won't devote any more space to it here.

3. *Books and Magazines.*

There were many new books in 1973, of course including more translations from the U.S. and the U.K. than original German SF.

A major event in the field was the publication of the first in a new series by the German publishing house Pabel: Kenneth Robeson's *Doc Savage*. This series was first published in the U.S. from to 1933 to 1949, with a new edition started by Bantam Books in 1969. Now, after 40 years, German readers will also be able to follow the adventures of the Man of Bronze.

A second major event was the publication, by Insel Verlag, of *Polaris, Ein Science Fiction Almanach*. This pocket book is actually a new magazine, equivalent in content to such American magazines as *Galaxy, The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Vertex*, etc. Its first issue combines SF stories, articles on SF (by Robert Plank, Stanislaw Lem, and Franz Rottensteiner), and fantastic art. It is edited by Franz Rottensteiner (who also edits the excellent fanzine *Quarber Merkur*), will limit itself to the work of European writers, and will appear twice a year.

Finally, Germany now has its own Sword-and-Sorcery pulp series--called Dragon. After the thrilling Conan series and the adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, Fantasy literature has gained many more readers in Germany.

4. *Fanzines.*

I am always astounded to see how large a number of fanzines is being published in Germany. I am already familiar with 56 titles, and I wonder how many more there may be that I don't know about. I think that's a lot for a country such as Germany,where SF plays such a small role in relation to the U.S.

Most fans who have been in fandom a while naturally devote their attention to such major 'zines as *Quarber Merkur, Science Fiction Times, Munich Round Up,* and the like. Those fanzines which are new and have only only a small print run are usually read only by the younger fans.

However, in October, 1972, a newcomer appeared on the scene, and received quick acceptance by fandom. In January 1973, when the second issue was published, it already had established a strong position among the German fanzines. I'm talking about *Vampir,* a magazine for those with an interest in science fiction and horror films. You can find out more about this marvellous 'zine by reading the reviews of it appearing in SOTWJ.

Another important new German fanzine is *Clutch Blood* (that appears to be a nonsensical title, but if you speak German you will realize that the title is pronounced like the German word "Klatschblatt", which in English means "tittle-tattle paper"). Perhaps *Clutch Blood* is a new attempt to make German fandom more fannish than it is now. In the early years of German fandom, fanzines like this one were spread all over the country. *Clutch Blood* contains only articles and LoCs on fannish matters, and has an unusually large number of fans contributing to it.

5. *Films.*

Especially noteworthy among the films released in Germany during 1973 were *Welt am Draht* (Simulachron 2), produced by Rainer Warner Fass binder, and based upon the novel by Daniel F. Galouye; *Ben* (which picks up where *Willard* ended . . .); *Tales from the Crypt* (with Peter Cushing); *Die Nacht der reitenden Leichen* (one of the best horror films I've ever seen); and Andy Warhol's *Dracula* (I think Warhol has since made better films).

Note that I listed four horror films, but only one SF film (which appeared on TV; the other four were shown in the movies). In Germany good SF films are very rare, but horror films (most of them miserable, of course) can be seen every day.

6. *SF in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).*

The first convention of SF fans in the GDR took place in Halle, in late August. Three authors were present: Gunther Kruphat, Carlos Rasch (who will be the GoH at the next SFCD con in Letmathe—August 2-5, 1974), and Mr. Rank (Sorry—don't know his first name). Also present were some "Kulturfunktionäre": a professional reader and the scientist of literature Sckerl. For the fans, the convention was a big disappointment. The convention goal of providing a basis for future cooperation between all persons with an interest in SF who are living in the GDR was not reached.

SCIENCE FICTION IN JAPAN IN 1973

by Takumi Shibano

1. *Three Major Events.*

The leading story in Japapese SF in 1973 is the phenomenal sales record of *Nippon Chimbotsu* (Submersion of Japan), written by Sakyo Komatsu (b. 1931), and published by Kobun-sha. This novel was released in March, 1973, and topped the best-seller lists for the year with an astonishing sale of nearly 4,000,000 copies (2,000,000 each of Volumes 1 and 2).[[I would suspect that this might be the largest sales figure for a proper (or rather, hard) science fiction story—not just for Japan, but for anyplace in the world.] A film adapted from the novel by Toho-Eiga Co. was released in December; it was also very successful.

Nippon Chimbotsu begins with a series of natural convulsions (earthquakes, explosions of dead volcanoes, etc.), and famous geophysicist Dr. Tadokoro and his research team predict that the whole

of Japan will have sunk within a year or two. The author's explanation of the phenomena in the story is very scientific (it is based on the latest theory of "mantle conversion"); his descriptions of phenomena and the activities of research groups, etc., are all very vivid, and are supported by his broad knowledge. But he says that his main purpose was to focus on the difficult escape of the approximately 100,000,000 people in the doomed country, rather than on the scientific background of the phenomena--and the story is also a serious political novel which illustrates very complex interrelationships between many countries.

At the end of the story, when all of Japan is under the sea and some 70,000,000 people have been rescued, instead of "The End" the author wrote "The End of the First Part", which indicated that he is going to continue the novel, telling about the wanderings of the homeless groups of Japanese in strange lands and through many eras.

Another major news item is that *San-Rei-Zan Hiroku* (A Hidden History of the "Hi" Tribe), written by Ryo Hammura (b. 1933) and published by Hayakawa-shobo, won the first "Izumi-Kyoka Literary Award" (a newly established award somewhat interested in fantasies). This was the first time any SF author has been given a mainstream literary award in Japan. The story is about a fictitious old superhuman group (or family), which--unknown to the Japanese--greatly influenced the history of their nation. The author made his debut in 1963 in a story contest promoted by Hayakawa-shobo, and after several years of obscurity, started writing very actively in 1970, showing a high degree of skill in story-telling.

The third major event in Japanese SF in 1973 is the appearance in bookstores in December of a new SF prozine named *Kiso-Tengai* (Fantastic). Published by Seiko-sha, it contains both SF and mystery stories (all translations), plus some original articles and other non-fiction items, and the official date of publication of the first issue (as printed in the magazine) is January, 1974. The 'zine is published monthly, and I hear that it is selling well.

This is only Japan's second SF prozine. The first, named *SF-Magazine* and published by Hayakawa-shobo, has been published since 1960.

2. *Authors.*

Shin'ichi Hoshi (b. 1926), ranked side-by-side with Sakyo Komatsu as an SF author, had two hardcover collections published during 1973. He mainly writes short stories, and is a sort of Japanese version of Ray Bradbury, except that his writing is characterized by an elegant sense of fable rather than poesy. (Sakyo Komatsu is the Japanese counterpart of Robert Heinlein.)

Yasutaka Tsutsui (b. 1934), who closely follows Hoshi and Komatsu in popularity, is cultivating his own field--a slapstick-style fantasy with sharp criticisms of humanity and human society. The number of hardcover books he has had published reached 20 in 1973, and most of them are best sellers. His most recent book is the collection *Nokyo Tsuki e Iku* ("Nokyo" on the Moon). ["Nokyo" is a rich Japanese farmers' union.]

Kazumase Hirai (b. 1938) recently took a big step, with his new hero the Wolf Guy. This is a sort of werewolf, and is in Hirai's popular action series.

Koichi Yamano (b. 1939), whose first book, *Take the X-Train* (a collection), was published in 1965, has been busy advancing his own literary movement in Japanese SF, as the leader of the "New Wave" writers in Japan.

Ichiro Kano (b. 1928), a noted mystery writer, has had his first straight SF atory, *Musei Shudan* (The Fallen Race), published in 1973. It deals with the human race at about the year 2300 A.D., at a time when humanity has been greatly reduced in numbers because only a few of its members still have the ability to reproduce.

In addition to the above-named seven, we also have the following active (full-time) SF writers in Japan: Ryu Mitsuse (b. 1925), Taku Mayamura (b. 1934), Aritsune Toyota (b. 1938), Tsutomu Miyazaki (b. 1932), Masami Fukushima (b. 1929), and Takashi Ishikawa (b. 1930). And a few semi-professional writers such as Fujio Ishihara (b. 1933) and Shozo Tokura (b. 1925) are also active.

3. *Publishing Activity.*

A new bimonthly magazine, *Genso To Kaiki* (Fantasy and Horror) appeared in April, 1973. It had five issues out by the end of the year.

As for books, aroung 160 were published in 1973 (about ¼ of them in hardback) --although the borderline between SF and non-SF is quite vague, so I cannot give an exact figure. About two-thirds of the books published were translations.

Hayakawa SF Series, which started in 1957, reached 300 volumes during 1973, although its pace has slowed down somewhat. Notable among its 1973 releases are Le Guin's *Left Hand of Darkness* and McCaffrey's *Dragonflight*.

Hayakawa SF Bunko (a small paperback series), which started in 1970, passed the 130-volume mark, with such releases as *Dune* and Farmer's *The Maker of the Universe* particularly welcome among its 1973 titles.

The SF line of Sogen Suiri Bunko (another small paperback series), which initiated in 1963, reached 150 titles during 1973, with the Conan series and Leiber's *The Wanderer* especially noteworthy.

Notable releases by the general publishers are Michael Crichton's *Terminal Man*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughthouse Five*, and Jack Finney's *Time and Again* from Hayakawa-shobo; W.P. Bratty's *Exorcist* from Kodansha; and Stanislaw Lem's *Cyberiada*, from Shuei-sha. (The last-named book has been highly praised by Japanese literary critics.)

Most active translators during 1973 were Tetsu Yano, Hisashi Asakura, and Masahiro Noda.

4. *Fandom.*

During 1973 I received more than 200 fanzines, published by around 60 fans and fan groups in Japan. Some of the 'zines are printed, some hand-mimeoed; some have been published continuously for more than 10 years, some saw just one issue and then vanished. Most are genzines, with the others devoted to a single author, or specialized in a particular area such as horror, news, comics, etc. And some contain both SF and non-SF stories and articles.

The most highly regarded fanzines currently appearing in Japan are:
NW-SF (Koichi Yamano, Tokyo) —"New Wave" stories and articles;
Uchu-Kiryu (SFM Fan Club, Tokyo) —Articles and news;
SF-Kurabu (Jun'ya Yokota, Tokyo) —Articles and stories;
Tentacles (Shinji Matsuzaki, Fukuoka) —Articles and stories;
Micro-SF (Shozo Tokura, Kofu) —Printed on a postcard; one story per issue;
Seigun (Masanori Takahashi, Kyoto) —Stories and articles;
Aya-No-Tsuzumi (group of the same name, Tokyo) —Stories and articles;
Focus (group of the same name, Tokyo) —Stories and articles;
Kagaku Makai (Takayuki Tatsumi, Tokyo) —Stories and articles;
Fandom-News (Yoshiyuki Kato, Tokyo) —News;
And, of course, the oldest and leading Japanese fanzine is my own, *Uchujin*.

Of the above, *Micro-SF* is purely personal, *Fandom-News* is a sort of official organ of our federation of fan groups, and *NW-SF* is sold at bookstores as a prozine. All others have a group behind them, to provide a financial base for their publication.

Japan now has four series of nation-wide conventions. The oldest is the Japanese SF Convention, the 12th of which (Ezocon) was held August 2-4, 1973, at the "Okotan" resort in Hokkaido ("Ezo" is the old name of Hokkaido). This had the smallest turnout since its inception in 1962, with only 90 fans and two pros in attendance.

The second oldest series is SF-Festival (Terracon 2), held on May 5&6 in Kyoto, with some 150 attending. This was its 5th annual gathering.

The third oldest is SF-Christmas, a small conclave of student fans held in December. Its third annual meeting was held in Tokyo on December 24, with about 60 participants.

A new series of conventions, called SF-Show and promoted by Masahiro Noda (a semi-professional translator) and his group, held its first annual meeting in Tokyo on September 30, drawing some 300 persons. Eleven authors were invited, and they gave lectures on their favorite themes.

There are around 15 local groups which hold their own meetings, some weekly, some monthly, and some three times a month.

* * *

[(Takumi appends the following note to his informative coverage of Japanese SF in 1973: "I know I should talk about films and TV, but my knowledge of the field is very short. We saw *Soylent Green*, *Lost Horizon*, the last of the films in the *Planet of the Apes* series, and many others in 1973. On TV, we can watch many animated SF shows (only a few of them imported) —but there is very little SF drama for adults. (In Tokyo we can select seven channels, all of them with color programs.) Radio is more interested in SF dramas, and there are at least one or two dramas on the air each month, which have been adapted either from translations or from original SF stories." —ed.)]

1973 COMICS — THE YEAR IN REVIEW

by Kim Weston

1973 has been an interesting year in comics. Major points of interest have been experiments from both National and Marvel, the National war comics, and several short-lived titles.

After featuring Superboy (or, in later years, Supergirl) for approximately 26 years, Adventure Comics switched to a new format devoted to adventure stories at first, starting off with a story about a flying horse finely executed by Alex Toth, a Sword-and-Sorcery story, and a West Indian adventure series set in the Caribbean. Later in the year super heroes returned to the magazine.

In the September issue of Batman, the two-years' overdue Neal Adams Batman vs. Joker story finally appeared, scripted competently by Denny O'Neil. Two issues later, the Shadow, recently revived in his own comic, made a guest appearance.

Detective Comics, after 10 years under Julius Schwartz, was taken over by Archie Goodwin, who blew our minds with a new version of Manhunter scripted by Goodwin and stunningly drawn by Walt Simonson.

Goodwin has also taken over three of National's war comics, already among the best comics published in recent years, and improved them. These comics are among the most underrated by comics fans at large. The back-up features are the really good features. Particularly notable, aside from Goodwin's scripts, are the addition of the new and very versatile Walt Simonson, the addition of George Evans (who did art and occasional scripts for EC), the continuing excellence of Ric Estrada and of Sam Glanzman's USS Stevens series, and the infrequent but brilliant work of Alex Toth. One might also mention the fine illustration of John Severin, Russ Heath, and—what surprised many people—the unexpectedly good work of Jack Sparling on the lead features, which sell the books and make back-up features possible. The writing on the leads is probably as good as, if not better than, the writing on most other comics, but not the sort that engenders the admiration of most comic fans. Needless to say, not everything is good, but the average here is better than in most comics.

Joe Simon returned to edit Champion Sports, Prez, and a romance title aimed, it would appear, at the very young reader—disappointing those who remembered his collaborations with Jack Kirby many years earlier.

Jack Kirby continued to write, edit, and draw Mister Miracle, The Demon, and Kamandi with occasional high points, but considering Kirby's capabilities, these comics have been pretty routine. Demon and Mister Miracle have been cancelled.

The mystery-horror titles continue, with excellent art and scripts ranging from unbelievably bad to excellent, but mostly fair or good. Some of the better scripts come from a long-time editor, writer, and artist, Sheldon Mayer, and others come from Mike Fleisher and Jack Oleck. Some of the stories have been leaning to the humerous side of horror, a development leading to PLOP (the magazine of Weird Humor, an apt description). This is a weird book in another way—no ads, just 36 pages of stories and gags.

1973 COMICS. . . (Continued)

In addition to the regular weird books, National published three oddities: the previously mentioned weird humor book, and books titled Weird War Tales and Weird Western Tales. The former is, as the title implies, a combination of War and Horror—an appropriate combination. Scripts aren't quite as good as in the regular weird titles, but are OK. Of particular note are Walt Simonson's first story for DC and a story by Alex Toth in the tenth issue, and a beautifully drawn Samurai story in the thirteenth issue. Weird Western is more western than weird, although one of the occasional characters, "El Diablo", qualifies for the weird. The main feature, Jonah Hex, is straight western, although the character's face is disfigured and he is a rather unsavory individual.

This is the year National revived the 100-page 50¢ reprint comics. Reprints for the most part have been very well chosen, and have included many excellent "golden age" stories. At the year's end, a decision has been made to switch several regular titles to giants and include 20 pages or more of new material in all giants as an experiment. DC is looking for a new format; 32-page 20¢ comics don't get distributed well, and the retailer gets only a few pennies per comic sold. The thought is that a larger package at a higher price will get better distribution and be more competitive, and this change is an attempt to test the market. Reportedly the giant comics do sell well. I think this is a step in the right direction, and I hope it won't be killed as was the last attempt in this direction—the ill-fated 52-page 25¢ format, viciously and short-sightedly sabotaged by Marvel several years ago.

After a lot of trouble starting, the Shadow finally appeared, with an adequate script and very fine, very moody artwork by Mike Kaluta. Reading Denny O'Neil's Shadow scripts, one gets the impression that O'Neil has a little bag of writing tricks which he is showing off, but with very little substance beneath the surface. The mood and atmosphere of the scripts is fine, but the stories leave me with an empty feeling afterwards, like there was really nothing there. This is the kind of comic one hopes will continue and get better scripts. O'Neil is capable of much better.

Another comic one hopes would continue is Sword of Sorcery, featuring Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. Unfortunately, that one was killed six months before the first issue was published. It was given a life of three issues at first, and later another two, but was then finally killed. During its short life it had problems: artwork late, very rushed art saved by exceptionally good coloring in the third issue, better art blotched by a bad coloring job in the fourth. It had a lot of potential and the scripts weren't bad, but it is gone.

Another major event was the revival of the original Captain Marvel in SHAZAM! Scripts by Denny O'Neil and Elliot Maggin have generally been pretty good and fun to read. Art by the original artist from the 40's, C. C. Beck, has been good and perfectly suited to the tongue-in-cheek character of the comic. Unfortunately, Beck has been largely replaced by other artists in a dispute over script control and quality.

The Superman family of characters continues and no super-hero titles were dropped during 1973, but mystery-horror titles seem to be where the market is.

Swamp Thing had a stunning beginning with fine artwork by Berni Wrightson and a good script by Len Wein. It continues to amaze people, as both art and script seem to get better each issue.

1973 COMICS. . . (Continued)

One of the big hits of 1972, Tarzan, continues with average scripts and excellent art by Joe Kubert, who appears to be set on adapting only one Tarzan novel per year, in 1973 continuing with a fine five-issue adaptation of The Return of Tarzan. Korak, Son of Tarzan has switched writers and artists and continues to plod along, but in the back of each issue are a few superb pages scripted and drawn by Mike Kaluta, adaptations of the Carson of Venus novels, worth the price of the whole book. The third Burroughs title, Weird Worlds, featuring John Carter and Pellucidar, dropped the Burroughs characters near year's end, and their passing was mourned by few because of the lackluster adaptation of the latter and the very disappointing deviation from the novels of the former.

The Burroughs features were replaced by Iron Wolf, a sword-and-sorcery space opera created by Howard Chaykin and showing great promise.

The old original-style Wonder Woman replaced the "modernized" version of a year or two ago at the year's beginning, and as the year ends further changes are in store.

Before writing any comments on Marvel Comics I should state that I have always prefered National's comics to Marvel's, although I reacognize that Marvel has done some very fine comics. I don't follow Marvel as closely as I follow DC, because I think Marvels are generally inferior. In the past year, as Marvel has increased the number of titles published to approximately 25 originals and 10 reprints per month, I have decreased the number I have bought, partly because of what seemed to me a decrease in quality. I am not alone in this sensing of lowered quality—several friends of mine who are primarily Marvel fans and collectors report the same thing.

In #18, Amazing Adventures introduced War of the Worlds, featuring a return to Earth of Wells' Martians. I bought the first two.

Spiderman has had a rough year, with the murder of his girl friend. Most of the heroes just continue to plod along.

However, Marvel's version of Captain Marvel has been revitalized, and has become an interesting feature since Jim Starlin took over first the art and then the plotting and scripting.

Claws of the Cat, a super heroine, went to an early and merciful grave.

Early in the year, Marvel published two mystery-horror titles featuring non-reprint stories, included among which were excellent adaptations of a number of stories by Howard, Bloch, Lovecraft, and John Jakes. Now all are reprints, and other reprint titles have been added. Marvel has, however, added several 75¢ black-and-white magazines that feature some of the same fare, and some continuing horror-type series and some reprints. Included among the 75c comics were two issues of Savage Tales, featuring a 60-page Barry Smith - Roy Thomas adaptation of Howard's "Red Nails".

Conan started the year with several fine stories by Roy Thomas (script) and Barry Smith (art). Smith left after the third 1973 issue. Many reasons led to his decision, but one of them was

1973 COMICS. . . (Continued)

his inability to do an art job which satisfied him fast enough to meet the deadlines on a monthly book. This brings up something which has long been a sore point with me concerning Marvel—when they get a successful book, it becomes a monthly, frequently with a drop in quality. The Conan scripts are still usually good. John Buscema's art started out well, but has declined somewhat since. But without Smith, it just doesn't quite have the same flair. Nonetheless, it is still one of the best Marvel titles.

Creatures on the Loose has been adapting Lin Carter's Thongor. Some people have remarked that the adaptations are better than the originals.

Doc Savage lasted eight lackluster issues.

The Monster of Frankenstein began with an adaptation of the novel and as a bi-monthly. Art by Mike Ploog was ideal, and scripts for the first couple issues were good. The book was so nice they decided to make it a monthly. Ploog reportedly quit because he didn't want to be tied down to a monthly schedule.

Kull has been Marvel's finest comic, bar none, with perfect art by Marie and John Severin and fine scripts by Roy Thomas, Gerry Conway, and Len Wein. After the ninth issue, John Severin quit, because of other commitments, and Marie, not wishing to do it wishing to do it without John, quit after the tenth. The tenth issue, as expected, was disappointing. With issue 11 Mike Ploog started doing the art. His work was very different from the earlier issues, but in no way inferior. (Issue 12, however, was extremely disappointing—both in art and script. I hope that will not continue.)

Luke Cage — Hero for Hire, featuring a black super-hero, has consistently good scripts and art, making it one of Marvel's three or four best titles. It ended the year with one of the year's best stories in any comic, a three-part story entitled "Retribution". Luke Cage is one of the few Marvel titles to survive the transition from bi-monthly to monthly with quality intact. With personnel and format changes scheduled for 1974, its future is uncertain.

With the death of Bill Everett in 1973, comics lost one of its giants. Sub-Mariner, Everett's best known and probably best creation, continues without him, but I no longer buy it.

Supernatural Thrillers entered 1973 with an adaptation of Wells' Invisible Man, an excellent adaptation of "Valley of the Worm" by Robert E. Howard, and an adaptation of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, before turning to more or less typical monster fare.

Werewolf by Night, a very good book with excellent art by Mike Ploog, went monthly at mid-year—and Mike Ploog, not wishing to be tied down to a monthly book, left it.

Worlds Unknown, hiding under a monster book title and cover (monster books seem to sell well), is actually an excellent science-fiction comic featuring excellent adaptations of stories by Pohl, Laumer, Edmond Hamilton, de Camp, Brown, Harry Bates ("Farewell to the Master"), and Van Vogt. Highly recommended!

Among the smaller companies, two items of interest have come out from Charlton: Yang, a title capitalizing on the martial arts fad, and the excellent E-Man by Nick Cuti (script)

1973 COMICS. . . (Continued)

and Joe Staton (art). The latter is well-written and well-drawn and generally fun to read. The hero is rather naive and innocent. His girl friend, Nova Kane, is working her way through college with a part-time job as an "exotic dancer".

Archie Comics has launched Chilling Adventures in Sorcery. Gray Morrow has complete control over the title and wrote, drew, lettered, colored, and edited the first issue all by himself. Later issues have contributions by others. Worth looking into.

Gold Key's Dagar is a sword-and-sorcery comic somewhat in the mold of Conan. Gold Key also published Star Trek and several mystery-horror titles of occasional interest. A couple of issues in the last year had stories by Walt Simonson. Of great interest from Gold Key are Walt Disney's Comics and Stories and Uncle Scrooge, both featuring reprints of great stories by Carl Barks (the guy who did all those great Uncle Scrooge and Donald Duck stories you read as a kid). There are also occasional Barks reprints in Walt Disney Digest and Donald Duck. One issue of the digest featured four fine Barks stories originally published in the 40's. Up to issue 25, Junior Woodchucks also featured scripts by Barks.

1974 promises changes. With the continuing bite of inflation and the paper shortage, the price of comics is scheduled to go up to a quarter unless the publishers are willing to try a format with more pages. DC seems to be losing some of its better young personnel. Marvel continues to gut its better comics with changes in personnel, frequency of issue, and format. I am not looking forward to a banner year in 1974, but perhaps (I hope) I will be surprised.

TV IN 1973

by Beth Slick

1973 was the year of the movie-made-for-TV (TV Movie) in the SF&F field. Even though SF TV series and movies shown on TV provided some unprecedented low points in programming history, the overall picture for the future is optimistic.

In the area of TV series, 1973 offered a plethora of mediocre-to-horrible SF shows. The first to appear was a British import called UFO. Each week the audience was invited to watch the inner workings of SHADO (Supreme Headquarters Alien Defense Organization) as they obsessively tracked down and killed as many visitors from other worlds as possible. UFO had very little to offer the serious viewer, as the show lacked any real depth, and its focal point was on the workings of the military. The actors did well with the material they had; some of them even provided a break in the routine. Also, UFO showed women in command of some important facilities, which showed that the authors were trying to do something worthwhile. Overall, the show was mediocrely even, occasionally good, and often contained at least interesting sections.

The second SF show seen on U.S. TV was sent to us from our neighbors to the north (Canada). The Starlost showed three young adults several hundred years in the future running through a huge ship (containing many city-size life-sustaining units called biospheres), searching for someone with enough scientific knowledge to set it back on course. Since it had been so many years since the ship had been sent from the "dead planet Earth", most people have forgotten they were on a ship. If no one could correct the "ark's" course, it would collide with a "solar star" (according to the computers). The idea of The Starlost was executed with such ineptness that it was amazing. The Canadian writers used outworn SF ideas that have been dismissed long ago by the rest of the world, and every week the trio would encounter a colony each more neurotic and predictable than the last. Granted, old ideas can often be revitalized with a clever new insight, but the writers of The Starlost had trouble staying with the basic premise of the series, and even exhibiting any elementary knowledge of science or basic logic. The bad scripts were equalled only by the acting—an odder trio of stars could not have been assembled. The bad lines were delivered with such absurdity that the show was often laughable. The two best episodes of the series had two of the three main characters out of action the entire hour. After half a season the show was cancelled.

The main event in the TV series area (for the Trekkies at least) was the return of Star Trek in animated form. Under the guidance of D. C. Fontana, the show started out by returning to the planets, or again meeting the individuals most popular on the original series. The show, however, takes full advantage of the animation, and has the Enterprise meeting with and traveling to heretofore impossible creations. The scripts are uniformly high in calibre, retaining the basic Star Trek philosophy. The actors from the original show are doing the voices for their animated counterparts, so the acting remains excellent, the characters unchanged, and the show entertaining in the traditional Star Trek fashion.

TV IN 1973 (Continued)

There were other series that, while not fitting strictly into the SF catagory, might be of interest. The shows that fit into the "weird" catagory—or, perhaps, the "stranger-than-fact" group. At any rate, Night Gallery and Ghost Story (later changed to Circle of Fear) appeared, providing a little entertainment. Ghost Story (an anthology show) usually had good ideas for each episode, but the endings, unanimously bad, either failed to resolve the show, or did so in such a vague fashion that it wasn't really resolved. Night Gallery (also an anthology show) in its first years was a good series, with SF/F/Horror often appearing together in one good story. In its last days (in 1973, and no longer under the guidance of the master, Rod Serling) it degenerated into another Ghost Story. The stories became vague and strange without the explanative qualities that had previously made them fascinating comments or at least good stories.

In 1973, several science fiction movies made their debuts on TV. Those that appeared included Moon Zero Two (an interesting, though little-known, movie), The Andromeda Strain, THX1138, Countdown (another good SF movie that has received little, if any, publicity), Planet of the Apes (and the sequals—all of which garnered huge ratings and prompted talk of a Planet of the Apes teleseries), Trog, a rerun of Marooned, Groundstar Conspiracy, Wild In the Streets, Frogs, The Illustrated Man, and Priviledge. The local stations provided the typical selection of movies (mostly from the '50's), all of which had been seen many times.

The production of TV movies was at an all-time high for the SF/F/Horror group. Despite the fact that SF/F movies seemed to be ground out at an amazing pace, each movie (including Don't Be Afraid of the Dark) was at least quite entertaining and done with surprising care, and the results were top-quality shows.

The Devil was the subject of a couple of these movies, and it seems the traditional pointy-tail Devil is a thing of the past. Roy Thinnes appeared as Satan in Satan's School for Girls, and Robert Foxworth portrayed the Prince of Darkness in another Devil-oriented movie, The Devil's Daughter. Both movies provided little more than entertainment, but were fun to watch.

In the "evil forces" catagory, several interesting movies were offered: Horror at 37,000 Feet, Don't Be Afraid of the Dark, A Cold Night's Death, and The Norliss Tapes. Don't Be Afraid of the Dark wasn't up to the par of the others, as it failed in many catagories—most importantly, the script was so slow and so vague as to make it an unbearable show. The other three films were excitingly original, with A Cold Night's Death breaking away from the previous traditional "gimmicks" of the genre, and providing suspense and a very surprising ending in an Arctic setting. The Norliss Tapes, though excellent in every other respect, ended without solving one of the major questions, so that it could easily become a TV series—an increasingly common prectice. Horror at 37,000 Feet not only succeeded as a horror film, but had a script that was quite literate.

Baffled and Visions of Death were the ESP entrants in 1973. Again, both films provided good entertainment with occasional flashes of brilliance.

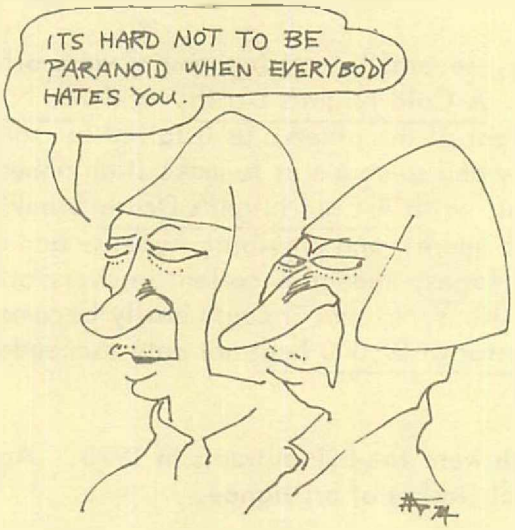
This was also the year of the re-makes. A very good re-make of Frankenstein was produced for the ABC late-night movie time slot, and later in 1973, Frankenstein: The True Story was

TV IN 1973 (Continued)

shown. Both films were excellent, with the latter departing from the more traditional story into a four-hour "horror saga" of magnificent proportions. An exciting script, creative special effects and an all-star cast provided one of the most important TV events in the genre (representing a large investment in time and money). Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde was re-made, with Kirk Douglas giving an excellent performance using very little makeup.

In the strictly SF area, a new Gene Roddenberry project, Genesis II, made its appearance, along with The Stranger and The Gargoyles. Genesis II was an interesting after-the-bomb story, with fantastic sets and interesting costumes. The Stranger dealt with an astronaut trapped on an alternate world, but was not a very original story. Gargoyles was a fascinating story about a race of beings, gargoyles, who are reborn after several hundred years and attempt to take over the Earth. The makeup and special effects used for the gargoyles to appear in the year. It was an exciting film.

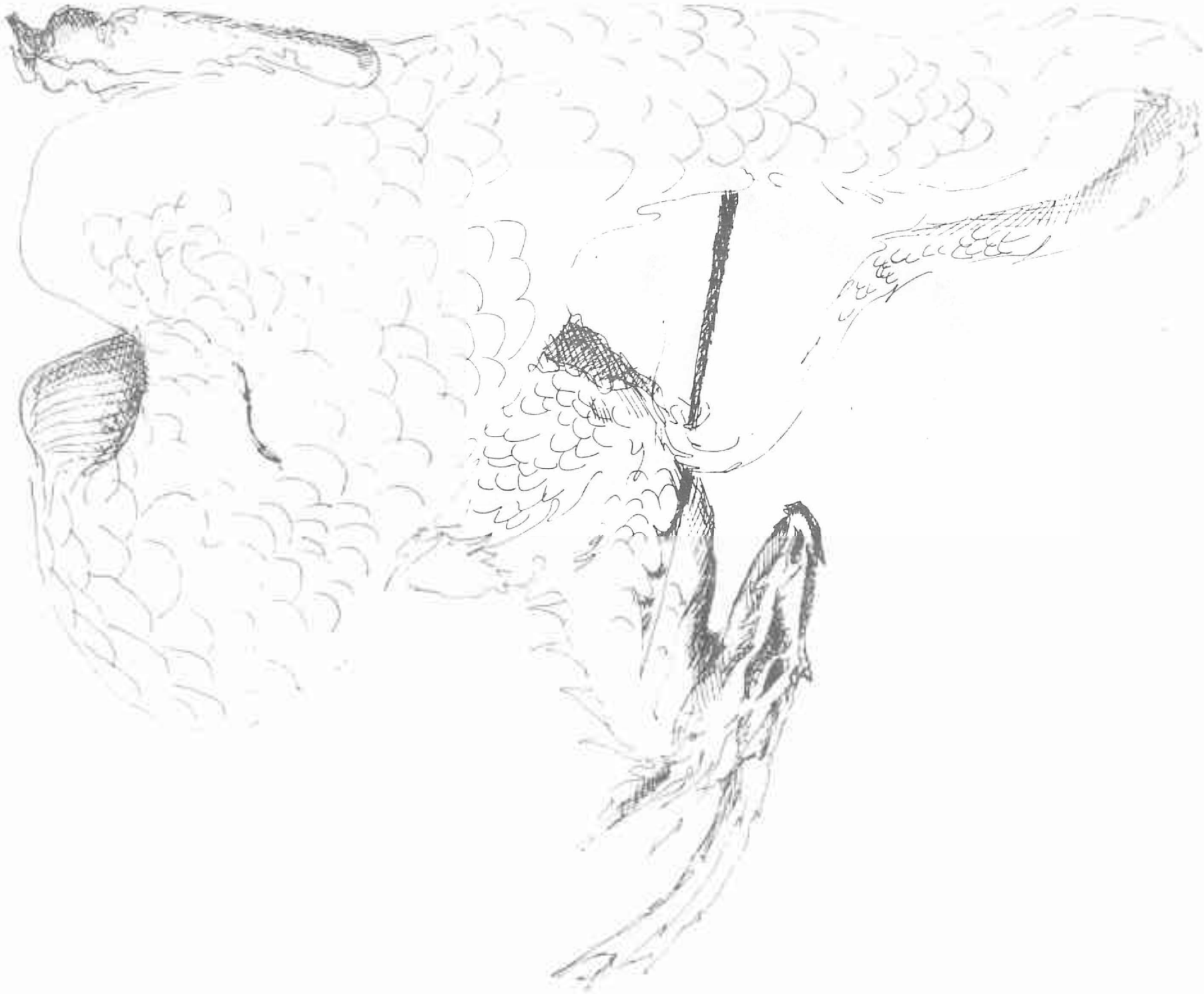
The ratings record-breaker, Night Stalker, was rerun in 1973 along with the first-run appearance of its sequel, Night Strangler. Both films were simply fantastic. The film, Cat Creature (with teleplay by Robert Bloch), rounded out the horror fare of the year. Night Stalker remains the best horror film in recent years, with the Cat Creature giving us a new "character" in the horror lineup. The experimentation in subject matter and production techniques with these TV movies is a good indicator of a healthy, active field. From Gargoyles to Night Stalker to Frankenstein: The True Story, the movies were all produced with an obvious new interest in a field that was previously reserved for the lunatic fringe of weirdos. Though 1973 was a bad year for TV series, the excitement for the genre created by the TV movies should spill over to 1974 to help create quality SF both for TV movies and TV series.

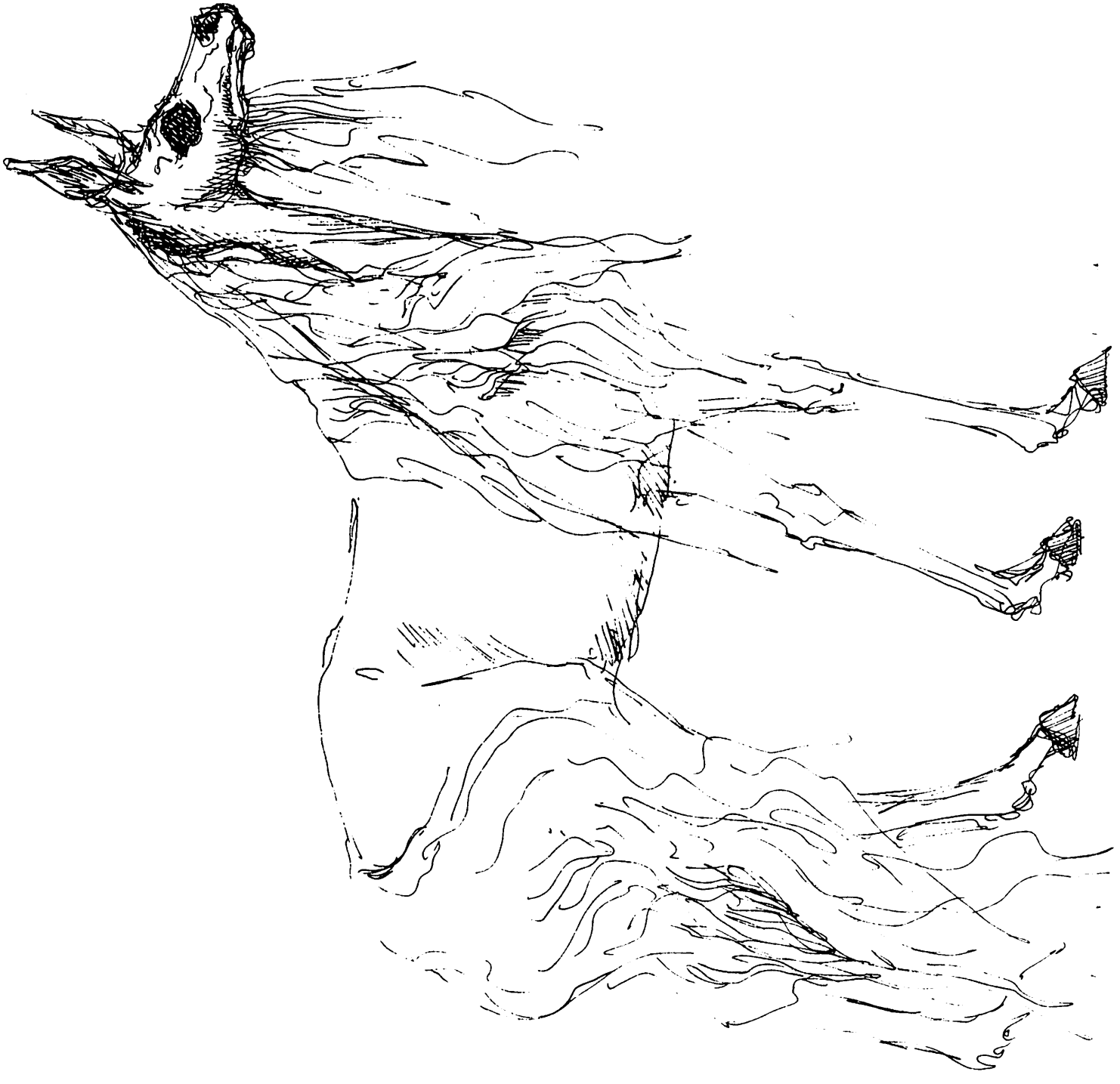


Bonnie's Beasties

Bonnie Dalzell


1924





Fan Fiction

YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'VE BEEN UNTIL YOU'VE COME BACK HOME AGAIN

by: Joseph T. Mayhew

Morgan was a troll; a common, goat-eating, bridge troll, the kind which used to be included in the blueprints of any respectable span. Someone must have loved trolls, because, as the saying goes, he made so many of them. Morgan was a dreamer; if he had been human, he would have been religious.

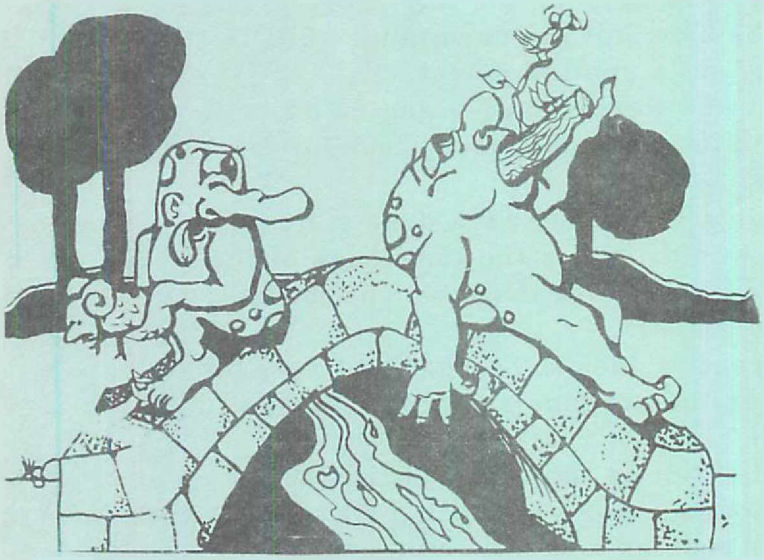
His dreams made him restless. Thus one day he felt he had to leave his cozy bridge to head out upon the paths of the earth. So, forsaking the known world, and packing a few goats to munch on, he headed out upon the weatherful ways.

His mother did not disown him. His Da, to his disappointment, only shrugged his shaggy various and sundries and predicted that 'Moggy' would wind up under some bridge anyhow. Morgan hated it when his Da called him 'Moggy'. It made him feel like a grubby little beast again.

So Morgan set out across the land avoiding bridges on principle. Prove his old Da wrong, he would. He stopped for tea at a riverside spot with no bridge for miles (though there stands a fine one on that spot today), and began to peel a goat. Presently another wayfaring troll came along. He seemed a likely comrade to Morgan and so he waved an affable greeting. The other young traveler came over and sat down on the riverbank across from him.

"Owen Jones, it is I am, and you, Dai?" ventured the rumpled stranger.

"Mog Davies," Morgan replied. "It is I am out upon the face of the wide earth to find the cause of my dreaming."



Seeing that Morgan was at his tea, Owen, in typical troll fashion, did not miss an opportunity to eat. Owen swiftly downed two oaks and a small chalky holly, which made Morgan feel slightly naueous. But when Morgan politely offered the fellow some goat, Owen blanched. Recovering his composure, Owen explained that he was a vegetarian.

"Is 'vegetarian' s Saxon word, Dai Jones?"

"Dai Davies, well and in my green valley we are thinking that it is strange and barbarous to eat goats and it appears to be a messy business," said Owen priggishly but with genuine friendliness.

"Well now, if you are eating the bushes of it, t'will not be your GREEN valley, ere long!" parried Morgan, thinking his remark a bit of brilliant repartee.

"Dai Davies, it is I am on my way to boldly go out from under the shelter of the homebody world to the lofty edge of the earth and there look over," said the vegetroll, ignoring Morgan's sally.

This philosophical debate continued with scarcely a pause until long after tea and until they were well on their way towards the falling sunset. Because each was so sincerely impressed with what he had to say, he never noticed that the other wasn't listening at all; and so by nightfall they were the best of friends.

"Mog, is it known to where is the lofty edge of the world and all?" Though Owen had framed a question, he went right on without leaving Morgan a blank to fill in. "Well and once a people told me where it was to, but I did not so well understand People-Welsh. Still I gathered that he said that the Saxon knows all about that sort of thing and all. So I went to Cam Bridge, where the Saxon locks the truth in. But none of them would admit to seeing me. They were so certain that I could not exist! It is the curse of their Arithmetic. A little of that kills the soul. It is the wisest of them who is blindest to what the simplest Taffy can see with his own natural eyes." Owen continued his anti-Saxon tirade until even he lost interest.

They reached the coast and began to wade out into the Irish Sea, reaching Ireland by suppertime. The Irish were delightful. Morgan, famished and exhausted, ate them by the handful. "Better'n goats they are." He enjoyed their stronger flavor and fermented tang. Trolls never dared eat a Welshman. If asked why, they will reply, "Because they are such good company," but their power to cause indigestion would have been more to the point. But the Irish!

"Troll liveth not by bread alone," expounded Owne, finishing a last mouthful of thatched roof. "It is time that we went our way to the lofty edge of the world and all."

"Owen, Boyo, it is for you to be seeking the lofty edge of the wide world, but for me it is I must be finding the cause of my dreaming. But I'll tag along for the now," said Morgan, spitting out a spoiled priest.

So they struck out due west and were soon resting on an island by the great western ocean. "Well and stand on my back, Boyo, and see if you can glimpse the end of the wide world."

Owen climbed up on Morgan's back and saw a dragon or two cruising in the distance; but not the end of the world. "It is the lofty edge of the whole world must be too far for a swim, but I am seeing dragons which might we be riding there and all."

It did not seem like an attractive idea to Morgan at first, but he screwed up his courage and splashed in after the dragons shouting, "Well and it were a narrow world with nothing new!"

Owen, close behind, added, "Nor is there any peril without its adventure!"

Catching a sea-dragon is not as simple as hailing a cab. To begin with they are a suspicious lot. Morgan's roaring and splashing caused them to slither discretely off.

"Well it's no good, Boyo," said Owen.

"Maybe I could charm them to us with my harp," said Morgan turning back to the shore.

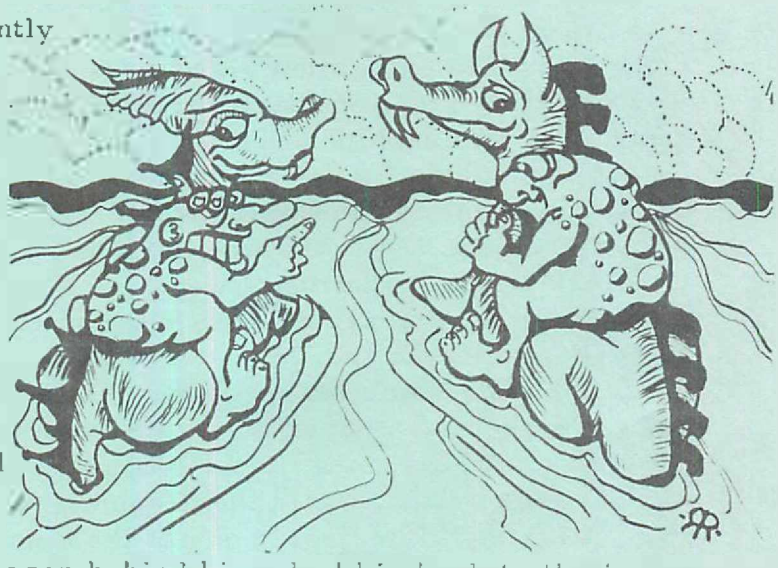
Swimming builds up an appetite, so Owen demolished a red barn, while Morgan paid a call on a previously sleepy village.

At dusk Morgan took out his harp and began to play. Dragons are not magically charmed by troll-harping; but, as they are Welsh, they cannot resist a sing-along or a good cry. First Morgan played some dismal love songs, and after a bit, a few dragons slithered up and joined in on the choruses: one fine baritone and several indifferent tenors. Next, to change the pace, Morgan played his very favorite, the jolly "Cyfri'r Giefr" (Counting Goats). After they had sung themselves out, Morgan introduced the topic of travel (with all the subtlety of an axe in the ribcage). Surprisingly, the dragons gladly consented to carry them both to the end of the world. When it was all settled, Owen talked everyone to sleep.

Morning found Owen defending vegetarianish ways to a score of gulls. Eventually Morgan and the dragons woke up (disappointing the gulls who had hoped the dragons were a godsend of carrion).

The party set directly off. Soon the trolls were out of sight of land and surrounded by a gang of dragon tenors singing "Cielo e Mare". The baritone afterwards did a solo from Siegfried, which strained his voice a bit reaching the low notes. Then, after considerable applause, he rendered one of his own compositions, a satire of Beowulf set to the tune of the "Pennsylvania Polka." Morgan harped along happily, while Owen, fast asleep, babbled on.

When Owen awoke, he was amazed. For there, straight ahead, was a limitless waterfall cascading silently over the edge of the world. But his amazement quickly changed to horror when he noticed that the dragons didn't seem to be paying any attention to the fact that they were heading right into it. Soon the sound of their singing was tainted by the shrill pleas of Owen trying to convince them to turn away from the brink of doom. The dragons seemed impossibly and dangerously stupid and heedless as they began one verse after another.



Seeing that Morgan, on the dragon behind him, had his back to the impending disaster, he cried out to him, "Mog, don't you see that great falls consuming the horizon and all?"

Turning around, Morgan nearly fell off his dragon when he saw the quiet menace looming large ahead of him. "Ach and well, surely we shall be soon sewpt over the lofty edge of the world into who knows what and for certain it will be injurious to trolls," sighed Morgan, wallowing in despair.

"Do these dragons fly, perhaps?" suggested Owen, all the while hoping it was just a bad dream.

"Look and they have no wings," said Morgan dismally.

"Could be we must make a jump off of them NOW!" Owen said feeling his body petrify with sheer terror.

"And then be swept hopelessly over the edge," uttered Morgan, who was high with misery.

"Fee, that I ever left my grove and all," whimpered Owen.

"Fie, that I ever left my bridge and home," said Morgan, enjoying a transcendent gloom.

And still the dragons sang on.

"Mamma," shrieked Owen as his dragon swam contentedly over the brink. Morgan saw it simply head over the edge and disappear. He managed an incredible amount of brooding in that instant before his dragon would be swept over the mysterious brink. He shut his eye and then morbidly opened it. The dragon didn't pause singing even as he began to pass over the noiseless edge of the world. Ahead, Morgan could only see empty blue. Then he steeled himself for the fall.

Morgan could not believe his eye. For instead of falling into eternity or boiling pits of unknown horrors, they had simply turned a corner.

"Really now," said Morgan, recovering his composure. "Well now, is the world square like a block and all?"

"Triangular," laughed the dragon. "Four sides altogether."

"That doesn't make any sense," sniffled Owen, still resentful.

"Neither did all your brave talk about looking over the edge of the world, then. What a ninny," said one of the tenors.

"It was a cruel joke, it was!" pouted Owen.

The baritone added in a consiliatory tone, "It was we dragons only wanted to give you boys a thrill."

"A thrill!" exclaimed Morgan. (The dragons did not know, or had perhaps momentarily forgotten that a <u>thrill</u> is a female troll.) Morgan failed to find it funny. He was bashful around thrills. Owen was visibly excited at the prospect.

Morgan asked, when the matter of the thrills had been cleaned up, "And are there lands on this side of the world?"

"Certainly," said the fine baritone, "mainly North America and Atlantis."

"Atlantis!" exclaimed Owen.

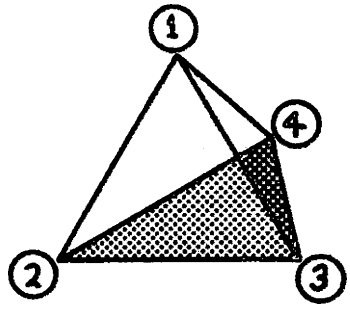
"North America!" exalted Morgan, "are the stories true and all about the marvels and magic then?"

"Probably some exaggerations have crept in. There is a fountain of youth, and the streets are paved with gold and any boy can become president. A fine place to visit, but not a fit place to raise a family. Nothing to make a dragon want to settle down," said the dragon.

"Atlantis," interjected one of the tenors, "is quite another story. Much more <u>authentic</u>."

"Just what is that supposed to mean, Boyo?" snorted the baritone derisively.

Owen, who often derailed the train of thought, suddenly spoke up as though he had made a great discovery: "WELL THEN THERE ARE ACTUALLY FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH!" and then he began a confused and lengthy explanation which I have tried to simplify by the following diagram:



Ignoring Owen's outburst, Morgan asked the baritone what he thought of Atlantis.

"My brother, Dylan, thinks it is a great and wonderous place; but he is a lout who enjoys trashy places," the baritone said looking at one of the tenors in a condescending manner. "I find it dull and full of Saxon and strangers. It is governed by sceptics and as far as I am concerned it needn't exist. North America is no better. What is it you'd really be liking?"

"Take me to forests," begged Owen.

"Goats!" chirped Morgan.

"That means South America!" sang a chorus of dragons in Wagnerian unison.

So the trolls were soon deposited on the verdant shore of South America. But after a little time, Owen found the forests dull and greasy. Morgan, was, on the other hand, quite pleased by the llamas. Owen was very bored and decided to go a roving again. He drug Morgan along with him as far as the tip of South America, where it meets one of the points of the world.

Looking at the moon, just a giant step away, Owen decided that he must go there, and so, hesitating briefly, he bid Morgan a brave "ffarwel" and leaped off the point into space. The pitiful, cowardly sound of his whine of fear was abruptly halted as Owen impacted on the moon, which h promptly began to defoliate.

Morgan stared briefly after him but soon thought to himself: "....no bridges there....time to settle down....need a bridge and bride to give life meaning." So Morgan set off for some serious thrill seeking.

Eventually Morgan found his way to Maryland. There, near Annapolis, he met a charming thrill named Gwyneth, who was under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge taking her toll of tourists. This was what he had been dreaming of, so he settled down by her side.

Unsurprisingly someone soon built another bridge over where he sat. "Home is who you are," he mused as he opened another car of people.

TWJ-84/62

THE MASTER OF HIS FATES

by: Alexis A. Gilliland

Sterilized by the color television, numbed by the food additives and bled white by usurious time payments, Clifford Stevens lay on his bed and awaited the end. His deus ex machina appeared.

"Where did I go wrong," pleaded Cliff, "What happened? Should I have gone off with Shirley the Speed Freak?"

The deus ex machina generated a sine wave on its cathode ray tube, and the room wavered.

Sterilized by untreated VD, numbed by bad shit and bled white by trips to the local blood bank -- his sole source of income -- Clifford Stevens 2 lay on a filth-encrusted mattress awaiting the end.

Too demolished even to be aware of his condition, the deus ex noted disapprovingly. A squiggle imposed itself on the sine wave and Clifford Stevens 1 looked at Clifford Stevens 2 through dying but cognizant eyes. The deus ex waved an antennae, and a claendar appeared on the wall with a date 4 years in the past of Clifford Stevens 1.

"That wasn't it," sighed Cliff. He had always envied Shirley's joie de vivre. "Maybe I should have taken by PhD in physics."

The deus ex altered his wave form.

Sterilized by improperly handled radioactive samples, numbed by the terror of his impending orals, and pallid with the anemia of eating on a graduate teaching assistant's salary, Clifford Stevens 3 lay on the bed, popping downers which he washed down with whiskey.

"That's how I'd be studying for my orals?" Stevens 1 gasped in horror.

"No. That's how you'd be committing suicide in a fit of profound depression induced," said Stevens 3 popping another pill, "by the fact that you are $14,500 in debt for a worthless degree you aren't going to get." He guzzled whiskey from the bottle, a little trickle running down his unshaven chin.

The deus ex machina permitted him a slow fade, and Clifford Stevens 1 stood beside himself in a thousand variations.

"This is the best of all possible worlds," intoned the machine, "but you must also remember that man is born to troubles as the sparks fly upwards."

Clifford Stevens 1 reached into the passing parade and grabbed Stevens 4734, who carried a television repair kit. 4734 studied the deus ex, and said:

"If thy picture tube offends thee, pluck it out," removing the cathode ray tube from the feebly protesting mechanism. He tested it on a meter. "Still a little good, but I'd replace it if I was you."

"Will you take a check?" asked Stevens 1.

"Sure, and the tube as well," replied 4734. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"I don't like what the machine has been showing me," said Stevens 1.

"We only fixes the set, buddy. There ain't a hell of a lot we can do about the program." Stevens 1 pushed 4734 back into limbo, picked up his tools and went to work himself. Presently, the deus ex machina reassembled to his satisfaction, he stood up and began giving the right-hand some strong pulls. Eventually the cathode ray tube showed three oranges, and internally there were clanks and jingles. Stevens 1 reached into his pocket and dropped a quarter in the slot. He got a shower of small change amounting to $3.50.

"Yes," he said, clamly, pocketing his loot. "This way lies madness."

Then he was back in his room, with the strangely altered deus ex machina where the color TV had been.

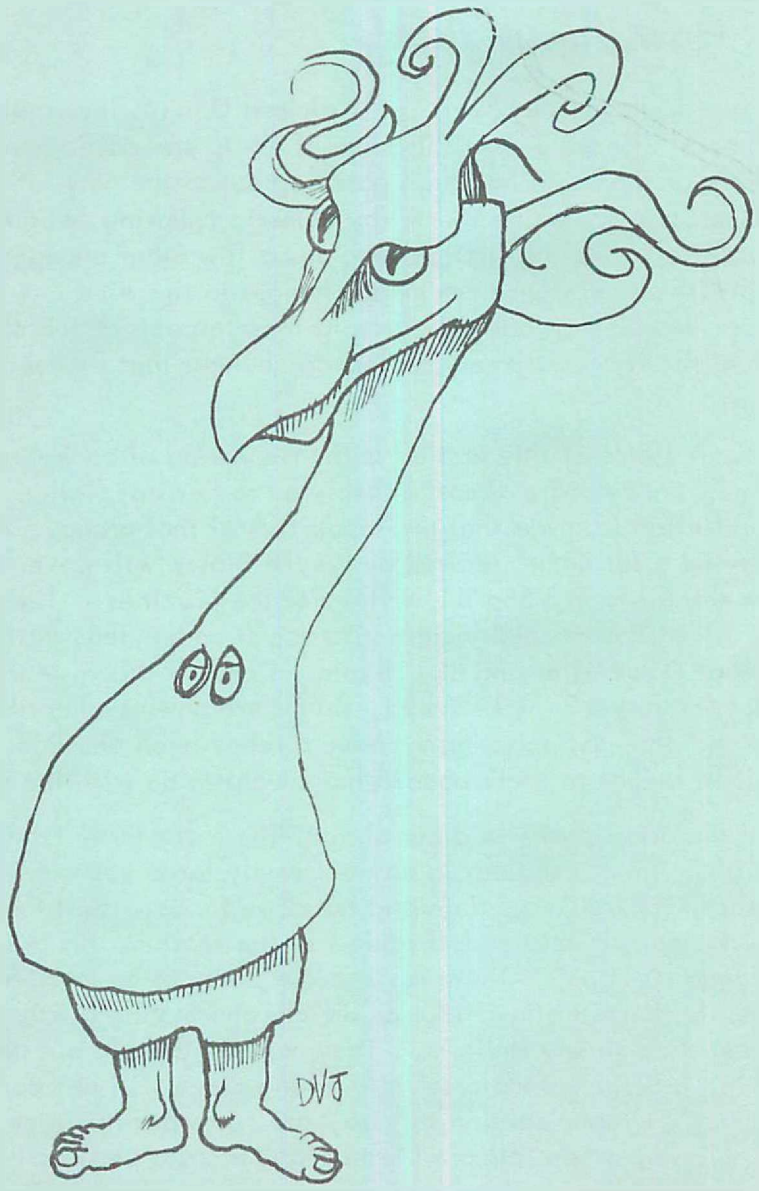
Stevens 1 noted with satisfaction that his time-bought clothes and expensive gadgets were all gone, and repressed a pang of regret for the air conditioner.

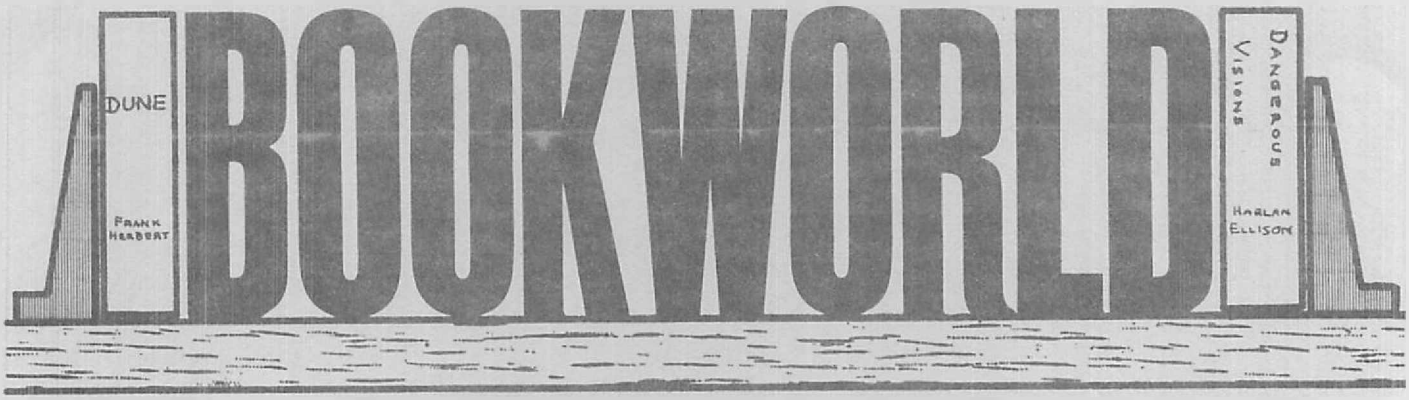
He turned to the machine and set it for operatic talent; tenor, first rate. ("Genius" had a caveat to the effect that it was hazardous to the health.) Pushing the button, he got a little vial of liquid and a hypodermic needle. The vial had a tag saying: IMPORTANT: Do not sing for 24 hours after the injection.

He mainlined his talent, and set the machine for training; opera and light opera, 10 years. He got a large bottle of small pills, with the instruction: Take two before each performance, one before rehearsals. Rx may be renewed at will.

Clifford Stevens went back to bed.

"Tomorrow," he murmured, "I shall conquer the world."





Argh! Don Miller created me! — *Jim Goldfrank*

Again? How 'bout that! — *Dave Weems*

Greetings from another (well . . . almost) Don Miller creation. A book review editor this time. Effective with this issue of TWJ, the editing responsibility for the various sections of the 'zine has been parceled out to the parts of a four-headed monster of which yours truly is one fourth (by numeric counting designation, not quantity in terms of volume). As the section logo and a few other changes that are already evident in this ish show, there are many changes in the wind. I will not dwell on the majority of them here, but will stick to those aspects of the changes, as presently perceived (and they are extremely subject to change) that I already know will affect this section.

The raison d'être of this section is the reviewing of book-length publications. The section will concentrate almost entirely on reviews of fiction in the SF/Fantasy arena and nonfiction in areas that are supportive of that arena. Another section, as yet not having a set name, edited by Wayne Piatt, will cover articles on subjects of interest in the fan world and the reviews of the prozines. The rest of the 'zine, exclusive of art and other subdivisions also as yet undecided, fall into the areas of responsibility of Don Miller and Bill Hixon. Does all this give the impression that things are not stable yet? Like I said, things are nowhere near being stabilized. For this section, though, some things have already been decided. Mostly because I've had a little longer to think about what I want to do with the section.

Within the areas that I laid out above, there are three types of reviews that I hope to publish. First, and not in any extremely large quantity, are the large reviews of the type that Richard Delap does and has done for us. Best example of this type review that I know of is the leadoff review of the section, his review of Harlan Ellison's Again, Dangerous Visions. These reviews are the ones on massive works or collections of like works, organized almost like an article and having a title, which are really criticism rather than simply reviews. They must be thought out and expressed clearly. Simple jamming together of material into a long piece will not cut it. Other examples, grouped in the '73 wrapup section this ish, are numerous this time, and include the anthologies reviews, where all are viewed from a basic perspective and reviewed and analyzed accordingly. Similar, non-wrapup reviews of related pieces, will be pubbed in this section in the future. A typical ish, I hope, will have one or two of these.

The second type of review, which I hope will provide the bulk of the section, is the moderate length review of a single book or pair of books. These will be what I truly view as 'reviews', consisting of less in the way of critical analysis (for the most part, though certainly analysis will not be forbidden) and more in the way of a consumer report of sorts. Why the reviewer liked or disliked a particular book, enough of what it is about to know what kind of book it is, and what interest area the reviewer reccommends it to, assuming he recommends it at all. For my own part, my reviews tend to fit into this category. Numerous examples fall into it in the material that follows this time. What I am referring to in terms of length is the review that runs anywhere from half a page to as much as two pages or so in the finished form you see here. Quantity-wise, I am shooting for something in the area of ten to fifteen pages of this type of material. Quality-wise, the standards will not be so stringent as for the long reviews, but sniping at random or by design from the hip will not be accepted by this editor if recognized as such. I want reasons for your likes and/or dislikes, but they can be as logical or as personal as appropriate to the book and/or the reviewer.

The last type of review that I am looking for is the short-short. This type of review now appears mostly in SOTWJ, which 'zine is in the process of being gradually phased out. What I want here is the very brief comment as to like or dislike of the book, cryptic indication of content, and recommendation or condemnation. Hopefully these will serve as the springboard to longer reviews where they are deserved, either because the book is that good, that bad, or that ho-hum average. A little more than a mention that it is in print. A mini-review of sorts. As an example that comes immediately to mind, Delap had a short review of this type in TWJ #83 about A, DV. He has followed it up with one of the longest and most thoroughly prepared critical reviews I have ever had the pleasure of reading. I'd like to see more of that. This length review will also allow us to air some mention of many books that might otherwise not ever be mentioned, be they deserving of longer treatment or not.

A couple of words about the publishing policies in the future. In past days, a number of reviews have been held and printed or not printed after long periods. In the future, luck permitting, that will change. I plan to read all submissions within a few days of receiving them. Material that is inappropriate either because of subject area (I'm not interested in pubbing reviews of gothic novels, for example, unless there is a very good reason) or quality or because I'm up to the goozle in reviews (though I don't expect to see that condition any time soon) and I don't have space to print it will be returned to the sender as soon as possible if a return address is included. Like Don, I wholeheartedly welcome any new reviewers who would like to contribute. I don't want this to become a house organ, so to speak, with a very few viewpoints. If you would like to have your reviews published here, by all means send 'em in. Or write a note first if you're the timid sort. But don't just sit there. Also, let this be notice to the effect that all book review material from now on until should come to me directly. The mailing address is as follows:

David W. Weems
P. O. Box 309
Oakton, VA 22124

The same box address also hold true for Wayne Piatt, and material appropriate to his areas of responsibility should be sent directly to him as well.

My last salvo to be fired this ish has to do with this section leadoff column. Quite frankly, I'm not totally sure of its eventual structure or much else except for the following. It will, once I begin receiving review copies that are presently going to Don Miller (**Publishers, take note—this change is also effective as of this issue), I will be issuing a 'books received' column. I will also broadcast not-so-gentle hints when I want reviews in a particular area or of the works of a given author, speaking of which, reviews of Asimov's work will be graciously accepted—we still have many openings in the issue we plan on him for #85. By all means, send 'em. Other facets of this column will materialize as things settle into place. I will be happy to entertain any and all ideas that you readers would like to put forth on this subject, or on any others I've covered or that are germane to this section.

Incidentally, while the idea of not-so-gentle hints is still floating around, I'll drop one right now. I am in the process of reading The Mote in God's Eye by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, published by Simon and Schuster. By any standard I can think of it is a major work. If even half of the jacket blurbs are accurate, and half way through I have found nothing to indicate they are not accurate, this book will be a powerful contender for both '74 awards in SF. This book is deserving of a very careful treatment. I plan to review it myself, but I want a diversity of opinions on the book, not just my own. I would like to be able to print my own review and at least one other, preferably more, in #86, which, with a little luck, will come out about the beginning of March. Which means I'd like to have reviews in hand by early February if at all possible. I'll take reviews of all lengths, so don't feel a bit bashful if you don't feel that you can do justice in comparison to a Delap (from whom I also wouldn't mind hearing on this book either). So get cracking.

With that, I will cease. Good reading to you.

Dave Weems

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS

book review by: Richard Delap

Again, Dangerous Visions, edited by Harlan Ellison, Doubleday, New York, 1972, 760 pp.

In the introduction, "An Assault of New Dreamers", there appears a flat statement: "I did not want to edit another Dangerous Visions," groans editor Harlan Ellison.

For those who may have been away the last five years, in outer space or other odd places, Dangerous Visions was the giant volume of original science fiction stories published in 1967 that became the cause celebre of the much-discussed "New Wave" in SF circles. The book sold extremely well and enhanced Ellison's already notable reputation as the enfant terrible of writers who with all time and space to roam about in were nevertheless becoming a little too stodgy for their own good. DV changed all that in no time flat. I liked the book, at least in part, though to this day I fail to see why it became the center of the tremendous controversy that ensued. With a few isolated exceptions the book was never really as "dangerous" as the advance publicity would have you believe, and I somehow could not see the point of flaying the radicals of the SF left and right through another volume calculated to prolong a war which didn't make any sense to begin with.

So Ellison didn't want to edit and I didn't want to read another book of trend-setting stories; and while he was obviously excited over the results of this new work, I could easily ignore all his editorial "curlicues and gingerbread", however entertaining they might be in themselves, as so much hardsell.

But if my prefabricated wall of resistance was already molded into place, the onslaught of forty-two furiously inventive writers crumbled it almost instantly, and Again, Dangerous Visions emerges as the definitive volume of new, quality science fiction on the rampantly expanding horizons of the genre.

The taboos and restrictions which were prodded and pinched but seldom truly deflated in DV are now just nonexistent. The writers here don't even seem to know they exist! Readers with preconceived notions of what "safe" and "dangerous" themes in SF may be are advised to squelch such notions before even opening this book, for Ellison and his brigand band have turned such concepts into mere words of folly as they sneak up behind you and shove stilettos into your back (or, as is sometimes the case, up your ass).

Not all the stories are good, to be sure, and a few are unqualified disasters. But even the disasters are for the most part attempts to do something different, to break away from the predigested mulch that keeps SF nestled in a barricaded corner, where it can be controlled by editors who feel they have a duty to hold the ends of the universe within easy reach.

It's difficult to make up my mind how to group the stories for discussion. I had first thought to take the best stories together, discuss them at length and relegate the less successful works to the paragraphs of short-shrift dismissal. I often work this way (over the screams of the dying), but A, DV demands something more: a sense of progression, the flow of stories as they are ordered in the book itself. So I've settled with the idea of starting with the first story and moving straight through to the last. This means a long, possibly too tiresome review that may smack of rote, but it's a chance I'm willing to take in the hope that I can convey the ups and downs of this ultimately progressive and tremendously exciting trip.

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

Ellison covers himself protectively — for all his bravura he still shows those traces of insecurity, poor fellow — by mentioning that his approximately 40,000 words of introductions "come free", and if you don't like them you've no reason to complain because they can be skipped. This is true, but I think that any reader who does so is a fool, for Ellison's super-hype gives the book an additional mettle that, however you react to it, is an important aspect of the total unit — I mean, what's a stormcloud without a little thunder and lightning? Ellison has a tendency to litter his opinions with minor factual errors — Asimov's Sensuous Dirty Old Man comes out as Sensual; a grade-Z horror flick, I Drink Your Blood, becomes a trifle more vivid as I Suck Your Blood; and Ellison, surprisingly for someone in the film business, doesn't seem to know the difference between the Motion Picture Code's 'R' and 'GP' ratings — but I have the suspicion that he just may be throwing out bones for the nitpickers to gnaw on. Take them or leave them, as Harlan says, but I suggest you take them. With salt. And good humor. As intended.

Ellison says John Heidenry's "The Counterpoint of View" is a "keynote entry. . . intended to set the tone and mood for what is to follow. . . a surreal set-piece that somewhichway conerstones the intent and attitude of the book." Some will find it intellectual nonsense (which, of course, it is) and others will find its two pages a crafty bit of intellectualism (which, of course, it is too). But anyone who can begin his second paragraph with a subtlety like this — "Shakespeare was introducing cryptography into English letters (having earlier practiced with fictional fiction in The Comedy of Errors and other plays)" — and travels from there along a helix that refutes every theorem we accept while concurrently refuting the refutation, deserves our respect for more than mere cleverness. He neatly exemplifies the adage, "Science fiction is what we mean when we point to it", and beyond that any definition brings in a margin of error. It's a delightful work, and truly does "set the tone and mood".

I would have thought a story opening with the destruction of the entire Earth in a great "blow-up" would be asking for anticlimactic troubles ever afterward. Rather than going for an excess of pyrotechnic extragalactics in "Ching Witch", however, Ross Rocklynne sticks it out on a personal level with his physically half-human (yet mentally entirely human) survivor of Earth's destruction, Captain Ratch Chug. Chug becomes a hero of the youth culture on Zephyrus, and his ego trip takes him on a very strange journey with an even stranger conclusion. Rocklynne explains the story's inception coming from his brush with the Haight-Ashbury hippie culture, but adds, "I tried not to make it timely." If the story's origins are clear enough in themselves, even without the author's explanation, the story is certainly not one of those cash-in-on-the-current-craze fluffs milking the public interest of late; and though Rocklynne states the story is "not supposed to have any theme", there are many throughout, all of them interacting in a current of the give and take of Life. It's a fine, fast story which leaves the reader begging Rocklynne to continue writing and not make this delightful work a final bullet.

Wasting no time, Ellison has next placed one of the book's nuclear explosions of SF art, Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Word for World Is Forest", a superb novella-length example of the breadth possible only in the finest of science fiction. Le Guin's themes are many-colored and fragmented, as are the occurrences of day-to-day living, yet they are not unpatterned. Like a kaleidoscope they form many patterns of conflict and merging within a contained sphere of reference. The author admits her tale is a moralizing one, but adds "I am not very fond of moralistic tales, for they often lack charity. I hope this one does not." She succeeds completely, and while not lacking charity her story does not whimper.

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

Neither does it barkingly proselytise. It offers the pros and cons confronting its basic moral question, and offers them with little fear of the harsh conflict necessarily involved. One may resent or cherish the obvious parallels to the problems in today's world — segregation, Vietnam, corporate sheepherding, etc. — but none of them, fortunately, are honed so as to be applicable only to our time. The problems are inherent and everlasting human ones, to which Le Guin insistently points out there are no answers forthcoming until we understand exactly what the difficulties really are.

There are no villains in her characters. The situation itself is the villain, and it is predominantly reflected through the vision of three persons: Captain Davidson, who is unable to accept the natives of Athshe (small, furred humans, called 'creechies' by the offworlders) as human beings, and cannot adjust his mode of thought to embrace any way of life different from his own; Captain Raj Lyubov, the only man to have made an effort to unravel the customs of the natives, including a half-realized understanding of a culture which thrives primitively on a planet of world-spanning forest, yet has attained a state of existence which involves an ability to pass between a state of reality (world-time) and something beyond (dream-time); and Selver, a native whose forest world undergoes a systematic annihilation by the visiting 'giants', but whose comprehension of the destruction comes only through a personal involvement with something previously unknown to his society, the art of murder.

An innocent civilization is beautiful, but its unsullied beauty survives only in isolation, and Le Guin does not believe such isolation can exist in a universe of interdependents. We are faced with our power to alter the balances at whim, and to bear the guilt of error. The tendrils of reaction spread in all directions, and even in the far future it seems probable that we will still be unable to detect and control them all. They branch rapaciously into a network of miasma and Eden, hope and despair, sparking the questions that have, do and surely will plague us for many more years. Le Guin's story is dangerous because it leaves us shouldering our own burden of responsibility. For all the care and concern we show, there are still more mistakes to be made, more guilt to be borne — and that is what makes her story the most uncompromising, painful and welcomely honest work you can find in fourteen tons of speculative fiction. It is brave, and the reader must have courage to stare directly into its objective face. With such courage you will not find avarice and bitterness, but naturalsim and beauty (and, yes, Mrs. Le Guin, charity). Such a reward is very worth looking for.

After the excellence of the Le Guin story, almost anything would have trouble emerging from its shadow, so Ellison follows it with something light and, unfortunately for Andrew J. Offutt, not very good. Offutt admits that "For Value Received" results from a clash with a hospital cashier regarding the balance of a debt, and proposes that "this IS a dangerous vision" on the grounds that his (former) agent told him "it's against the rules to spoof the medical profession." First, the story is much too obviously a fantasy spun out to cotton candy consistency from a common and cheaply-flavoured base ingredient. Secondly, it isn't a spoof of the medical profession at all, no matter what Offutt's (former) agent tells him. The idea of leaving a child in the hospital because one refuses to pay the bill immediately strikes me as a hypocritical situation, a tactical refusal to face the inherent horror of the individual's loss in the iron grip of Big Business. Even played for laughs, it's much too thin, too indecisive and too desperate to wring out the needed irony.

Gene Wolfe's three little mood pieces — 1. "Rabot's Story", 2. "Against the Lafayette Escadrille", 3. "Loco Parentis" — under the cover title "Mathoms from the

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

Time Closet", are what Wolfe calls "my hang-ups", and adds that "many of the things you thought I said, you said." Apparently his hang-ups aren't in the same closet as mine, and I found it difficult to relate to the first and last stories. The middle one, however, gave me a slight tingle, but whether from a simple hookup to my own hang-ups or from a true artistry on Wolfe's part I'm not really sure. They're all short pieces and should be read if you're curious to know if Wolfe, toggling psyche switches, has the good fortune to toggle one of yours.

In this age of porno shops and clinical sex studies, it's hard for many young people to believe that some of the Old Guard, the Puritans, so to speak, still cringe at the mere mention of subjects like masturbation, which is the central hinge to Ray Nelson's brilliant fantasy, "Time Travel for Pedestrians". Those who may damn the story for its method of approach shouldn't be reading this book in the first place (unless they're seeking to 'broaden their horizons', as the saying goes), but if they can make it over that initial hurdle they'll find the story is surprisingly one of the most moral stories in the book. Those looking for what Nelson calls "some real guts and glory" in their fiction will find it in abundance in this ballsy look at time-travel embarked upon by a man who sprinkles a dish of ice cream with an organic (hallucinogenic?) drug and masturbates his way to other times and places to the insistent tape-recorded chant of "Ego-Death". The situation becomes a philosophic duel, a study of excess and contrasts. Beginning with a graphic, startling, soul-searing experience in transsexualism, Nelson grips the reader by the crotch and hauls him through a series of violent deaths stemming from both love (or whatever passes for love at the time) and hate. And following each death is a rebirth, a lively cycle through which religion dances a frighteningly confused harmony around the brave traveler, with a special accent on the contrasts in Western and Eastern religions. But how can such an adventure end — in the courage of convictions? in the hands of a capricious Fate? The contrasts persist, and anyone who reaches the end of this superb story without copping out in disgust or horror has already won his half of the battle with the dark angel. Nelson has given the SF reader exactly what he needs, mind-bending surprise and challenge, an era-spanning drama of discovery in the depths of human consciousness.

Religion is seen from a different point-of-view in Ray Bradbury's verse, "Christ, Old Student In a New School". Those of the Christian faith may find in this Christ-poem the "promise of new opportunities" Bradbury sees in the future, but it may also confuse those who have held the notion that Bradbury is anti-technology, since his verse suggests fulfillment in "rockets through the roofs / To night and stars and space". Being neither Christian nor anti-technology, I am left contemplating the spirit of the author's beliefs as an expression in style, with such as this: "Man warring on himself an old tale is; / But Man discovering the source of all his sorrow / In himself, / Finding his left hand and his right / Are similar sons, are children fighting / In the porchyards of the void?!" And somehow, sad to say, the spark is not there; the subject is too great, the words too small, the mesh confusing.

Like me, you may be finding ecology stories getting a little hard to swallow these days; their taste is overfamiliar. After all, our news-stands are loaded with dozens of books and magazines, a seemingly endless stream of scream and rant and rave... and profit. It has become the new profession, to be "aware", to be concerned, but it is a profession almost totally ignorant of priority — and the decimation continues. Does Chad Oliver's "King of the Hill", a fantasy of a billionaire with a plan to save the worthwhile denizens of Earth from the yawning grave, do anything more than the serious and psuedo-serious essays? Probably not, but if it fails to move us to action it is at least a story with

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

a reasonable sense of humor and drama, which makes it worth more than many times its length in ecology scare sheets.

"The 10:00 Report Is Brought To You By. . ." is a message story, but in it Edward Bryant fails to see the cant of his work, for this story of the exploitation of violence and sensational subject matters in the television newscasts exploits its own subject. There is no real point in telling us we are voyeurs (and hypocrites about being so) without at least trying to tell us what we might do to, if not change, at least understand why we allow ourselves to be so blatantly used. Although the year is 1980, it's obvious that Bryant is writing about Now, extrapolating nothing but an increase in the size of today's worryrags. As science fiction it's uninteresting; as message it's as familiar as a TV jingle, without even an annoying, lilting melody to stick in your brain.

And speaking of familiar messages, you wouldn't think there was much left at this date to say about the so-called generation gap, after all the thousands of pages of factual material on the "youth revolt" and innumerable silly stories of LSD in the water supply, adults incarcerated in prison camps, etc. etc. etc. This dreamworld of youthful hopes seems to have convinced the majority that the world will somehow soon miraculously embody all these idealisms — or at the very least change the status quo enough to see their possible realization. It takes an author with guts to dissolve the sugarcoating and project a different, more horribly probable culmination of today's trends, and Kate Wilhelm is not just parroting a tribe diatribe when she worriedly states "I think this is a demented society." She's willing and supremely able to show us why, in a projected future where the establishment of the adults has calcified into such a rigid structure that rebellious discontent is on its deathbed, and youngsters will never know dissent because it will not exist. Sound impossible? Look around you, then; look closely at the young people (and if you're young, rip off your mask and really look at yourself for a moment), examine the pretenses and the fears (especially the fears) that prompt conformities. Wilhelm's startling X-ray vision alone is enough to make "The Funeral" thoughtful reading; but even more compelling, more nerve-wracking, are the black and grisly undercurrents churning beneath, shifting to reveal brief flashes of vivid colors we're so afraid to glimpse, rivulets of sadistic scarlet, pulsing violets of repressed sex. The story is so unbelievably intense that, like a horrible accident, one doesn't want to look but cannot turn away. As with her brilliant novel, Let the Fire Fall, the story runs the risk of being overlooked because so much of its stinging bite is in the undercurrents, not spread over the surface with screaming, flashing neon tastelessness. Read it slowly and with passion; you'll feel the needles sink in painfully and the resultant deflation will not be pleasant. But, by damn, you'll remember it. Bravos!!

James B. Hemesath's "Harry the Hare" is a quick bit of nostalgia about a popular cartoon character who has reached the end of his reign with the advent of tightened Hollywood budgets and the disinterest of new audiences. He gives himself to his remaining fans, snipping himself into pieces in a surreal homage to the style and humor of animation when it was an art rather than an empty technological profession. The story lacks the sharp edges of a clean cut and isn't really very successful, but Hemesath seems to have talent and may possibly do some better things in the future.

In introducing Joanna Russ' story, "When It Changed", Ellison has the courage (gall?) to state forthrightly: ". . . as far as I'm concerned, the best writers in SF today are the women," and I'm not afraid to stand beside him and second the assertion. I found myself more fascinated by Russ' 2-page afterword than by her 6-page story — not

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

her best effort, although the first and last pages contain some exquisite philosophical imagery — and I wonder if I wouldn't have been happier just bouncing the author's conjectures against those of Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millet and Germaine Greer, counting the places where they merge and dissent. Russ' story is not a Women's Lib essay-in-disguise, but it does offer some valuable speculations regarding the alleged difference between the sexes, posing questions which cannot be truthfully dissected with assumptions. If sexual preference is so easily adjusted to an atypical situation (isolation or limited indulgence or both), then cna any preference really be a perversion? Is it then a perversion in a typical situation? Does sexual perversion even exist? Her thoughts seem to have advanced a great deal since the losing battle she waged with sexuality in her colorful but confused novel, And Chaos Died, and the intrinsical nature of the story may help the reader overlook the rather lacklustre development of the plot. It's a flawed but still good story, with little meat but lots of interesting clackety bones.

Those familiar with Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s previous work (and today who isn't) may find "The Big Space Fuck" very much off his usual form. It is surely one of the most cruel things Vonnegut has ever turned out, even in its obvious self-satirization. It is despairing, and perhaps somewhat evil, in its depiction of a plan to fire a rocket of frozen sperm to the Andromeda Galaxy, to assure the continuance of the human race which is dying in the Earthly wastes of its lusting greed. It is heartless in its accusations directed toward the excesses and ignorance of the individuals who make up a sheep society, yet it is cynically, wickedly funny about the sickness behind the termination of a world. Schizophrenic, humorous yet joyless, it is an insane story of graveside manners which readers will likely be categorizing as madness and/or sadism for months to come. I personally don't think it quite deserves the attention it is bound to catch, considering the often superior company in which it stands, but there's no doubt that the story is an attention-getter.

With a very limited production, T. L. Sherred has still become one of SF's most respected authors, and "Bounty" will reveal to the uninitiated precisely why. In two pages he takes an idea, a chillingly plausible idea, and lets it turn our concepts of justice, law and order, into an upside-down cake laced with pretty poison, as a violent society re-adopts the old Western code and citizens find the lure of a cash reward for killing armed robbers a satisfying control. It's a striking, pungent, subtly acid vision that pointedly condenses more about the violent nature of man than a library of sociological and Federal reports. It's not a smidgen less than excellent and is one of the book's stellar achievements.

Surely all of us have wondered what it's like to be an astronaut, but how many of us have succeeded in pulling the figure down from the plastic, public pedestal to the sweat and smell and fragments of capricious thinking that keep us, the rest of humanity, somehow 'different' from the famed and adored/hated? K. M. O'Donnell's "Still Life" seeks to make us alter our perception of such a figure to fall more in line with ourselves, the real human beings. And if a nagging feeling in the back of your head insists that, of course, such men don't really react so humanly to a reality that holds to a fantastic experience like space travel — hmmm, then maybe you'd better check again your own concepts of reality and humanity?

I wish I could say I liked H. H. Hollis' "Stoned Counsel". It is neatly written and has a clever idea to play around with — namely, the use of drugs to fight out court battles. Clients have a choice, but lawyers are required to undergo drug sessions in

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

which the facts and supposed facts are bandied about in hallucinogenic trips until the deduced truth is revealed, at least as far as can be ascertained by the computerized legal system. Yet Hollis concentrates so heavily on the kinky visual images of the drugged lawyers, images somehow pulled from the two minds and projected onto a screen, that the actual story becomes secondary to the Wham-Pop-Zowie display and is never more than a thin excuse for the stylistic method. While some of the descriptions are quite vivid and little of the story is actually dull, one emerges from it all feeling that the dangerous vision has been sidestepped behind an extravagant facade.

Bernard Wolfe's SF novel, Limbo, according to critic Damon Knight, was "full of gallows humor. . . lavish, intricate masses of philosophical apology and analysis, as luminous as anything in Koestler. . . thoroughly peppered with puns. . . poetic and penetrating. . . a great achievement." Then, just to confuse us, it seems, he also said "it falls [far] short of perfection" and that the novel's central character is "never believable." Such strange comments are what prompted me to read the novel, and it was only then that I grasped exactly what he meant. In the twenty years since the novel was first published, Wolfe has scrupulously avoided genre classification and now, like Vonnegut, can afford to piss off with "finger exercises" (as Wolfe calls them) in "the irrelevant muzzy junk of SF" (again, Wolfe's phraseology).

I think that the two stories here, under the umbrella term "Monitored Dreams and Strategic Cremations", show that Wolfe hasn't changed an iota in twenty years; he is far short of perfection, yet still produces a great achievement. "The Bisquit Position" is literary napalm aimed at those who insist that such atrocities as Vietnam are necessary to world peace, while "The Girl with Rapid Eye Movements" tangles with the application of science on the homefront, namely the scientific invasion of privacy. Ideas are hurled to and fro with orgiastic abandon, many of them flying out the window with the force of uncontrolled radicalism, never to be seen or heard from again; others are hounded and cornered, probable rabbits at the mercy of slavering hounds. Wolfe's characters, for all their engaging puns and disarmingly literate chatter, are still only mouthpieces who seldom confront their philosophical problems with anything resembling real sweat, dodging all issues with remarkable ease and dextrous fluid motions. I suppose this, too, is part of Wolfe's condemnatory assessment of the current human condition, but it does keep the reader at a distance from the source of and personal relationship to the challenge at hand. Yet, in spite of such dazzling if slightly annoying cleverness — including a bristling, razor-toothed afterword which concludes that "Humansim. . . is incompatible with scientism" and will leave romantic SF lovers screaming and drooling with shock and gross mental pains — Wolfe's ideas are not just the familiar no-no's and do-not-open's we usually find in the popular versions of controversy examined through milkglass. No, the stories are not, in the usual sense, SF — but I agree with Ellison: "Damn the rules." Read them!

Ellison tries to sustain the fake charisma about David Gerrold — whose only (and questionable) claim to fame thus far is a silly Star Trek script and a few negligible stories[1] — and it's one of the few times I balk with the editor's super-hype method. "With a

[1] Since this was originally written well over a year ago, I have had reason to soften my criticisms of Gerrold somewhat. His novel, When Harlie Was One, was a good one; however, he still displays an annoying and pretentious ego that makes me bristle when it creeps into his fiction.

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

Finger In My I" is as littered with hazy thinking as the author's concluding comments about definitions of sanity and public tolerance of antisocial behavior. The story tells of a man whose 'reality' is constantly shifting and changing in response to others' reality, but tells it in such a muddled and eventually nonsensical way that it never does more than flounder in silly syrup. The allusion to Lewis Carroll in a Cheshire cat psychiatrist, along with an unending stream of dullard humor, pointedly reveals how far Gerrold has to go before he can understand the levels of Carroll humor, much less emulate them.

Piers Anthony's "In the Barn" is seriously flawed by a contrived and preposterous framework, by needless and artificial detail of the protagonist's personal lusts (detailed in a too-willing compliance to Ellison's suggestion, as outlined in the introduction), and by a conclusion that is much too indecisive dramatically. Yet the story works in many ways, dealing as it does in shock value and quite ably doling out some eyebrow-lifting scenes in profusion. It takes place on an alternate Earth where domesticated mammals are nonexistent and women are bred, milked and stocked like cattle. While Anthony is never quite able to provide Hitch, the investigator sent from our Earth to check out preliminary reports on Counter-Earth #772, with a reasonable explanation for his (or Earth's) involvement in the alternate world(s), he succeeds very well once the preliminaries have been arranged, and readers are likely to find themselves involved despite the dubious setup. Chop off the opening and closing paraphernalia and there is a sustained mood of horror, something very akin to the humanitarian urge to place one's self in the other's place before deciding to throw stones... then recoiling violently when the stones come anyway. The unresolved questions and suppositions lead one to suspect that Anthony could wrest a good novel from this if he could create a logical whole, but meanwhile the reader can ignore the cursory frills and enjoy the sustained unease which makes the heart of this story so disturbing.

Lee Hoffman's "soundless Evening" tells of the world of tomorrow — and, as the author states, "concerns now" — with no room for children except as one-for-one replacements in a stable population, but is so emotional that it neglects common sense. Infanticide is so irrational an act in all but the most primitive or unusual circumstances that its acceptance as an answer to population control must have more than the placid acceptance Hoffman projects here if it is to have some recognizable vision of terror. The only threat offered is overpopulation, and this speculation concocts tear-jerking as a fake rabbit out of a suspect hat. Nice ruse for a magic act, maybe, but quickly boring and quite untenable on any larger scale.

Next comes an innovation, a "vieword" story. This is a nonsense term devised by Ellison to describe Gahan Wilson's combination of the written word and drawings titled "[Spot]" — actually written/drawn as a literal 'spot' that I won't reproduce here for fear of giving the overworked editor of this magazine a heart attack. (Praise be to Whoever it happens to be currently at the top of my to-be-praised list for this small but worthy blessing! - Ed.) There is some light entertainment in reading/watching the spot expand until by story's end it consumes half a page, and like a mild but clever joke it works well as a one-time item. It doesn't have the power to amuse over and over like Wilson's cartoons or more complex literary humor, but the initial reading is funny and I think that's probably enough.

Joan Bernott's "The Test-Tube Creature, Afterward" is a thoughtful item about a man and his 'pet', Hillary, an intelligent animal mutation which (who?) assumes a place

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

in the man's life that, according to the author, should be filled by a human being. There's no armtwisting method to force the reader into thoughts of inverted, misguided or disproportionate love; yet these are the thoughts inspired and implied by the story's conceptual eddies of perversion, eddies which draw up something buried deep within us all, I think, and may well reveal through this one interpretation the many substitutes we accept in our emotional outlets, often without recognizing their nature.

After the sinking of their ship, an engineer and woman journalist drift for days on a makeshift raft, the man racking his brain for methods to keep them alive while the woman slips irretrievable into madness. A study in isolation, Gregory Benford's "And the Sea Like Mirrors" is made even more intriguing by the presence of aquatic aliens who leave cryptic messages for the humans and who seem to be manipulating a plan to take over, or at least fully inhabit, the earth. Benford occasionally slips into an annoyingly artsy-crafty tone that makes his allusions to bigger-than-life sociology sound pretentious, but the story is reasonably successful in dealing with the isolation of individuals as a spearhead of drama.

Evelyn Lief's "Bed Sheets Are White" is a hate-letter to the general acceptance of hypocrisy in the American Way of Life, a projection showing the lack of response which is condemning us to a hell of our own making. Lief tells us that just around the corner are laws against true understanding, laws against honesty, laws against nature — i.e., a horrible and horrifyingly intense effort to shape us into schizo-perverts in the holy name of prejudice. The fact that I like the style in which Lief writes, as well as what she has to say, does not keep me from disliking this story very much. It loses all its dramatic impact in a simplification that assumes the reader will succumb to fright tactics for their own sake. Ms. Lief, you assume too much.

Ellison speaks of various writers doomed to be crushed by fame in his introduction to two stories by James Sallis — "at the fitting shop" and "53rd american dream", with the over-title "Tissue". I find that one of the mentioned authors, Horace McCoy, is one I had previously thought about when reading Sallis's works, which often reflect the fatalistic, microcosmic vision McCoy employed so accurately in his classic short novel, They Shoot Horses, Don't They? Trying to explain Sallis' stories in plot synopses is not unlike trying to embrace geophysics with apples and ornages — the medium is simply not the message. The reader is invited to bring his own interpretations to Sallis. I will only say that the stories reflect forms of fear ("New York terrifies me. . . and that. . . is somehow what it's all about," says Sallis) which humanity has spawned in a world of sophistication and rampant null values. You may or may not like Sallis — I like him — but it's impossible to just ignore him. He knows the nerve centers.

Elouise, a human specimen of perfect health on a world where such perfection is an exception in a population suffering from almost every conceivable malady, is examined by the planet's Council of Doctors, who conclude that she is indeed disgustingly healthy. What is compelling about Josephine Saxton's "Elouise and the Doctors of the Planet Pergamon" is the fact that Elouise's plight is not the only issue of the story, the usual overinflated method of half-wit writers who facetiously bet moral points only when playing with a stacked deck. Saxton uses Elouise as both a character study and as a mirror, detailing her desire to find a place for herself where the only acceptance she has is in her own head — a head subjected to cultural pressures, a head primed to explode in new (yet quite old) directions. I have not always agreed with Saxton's fictional psychological

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

analyses, yet my objections often seem more instinctual than rational, and I have trouble refuting her completely. This time I agree with her — which, sigh, means someone out there will be screaming: No, No! — but however one reacts to her ideas it's a sure bet that she can trap both the wary and the unwary, the believers and nonbelievers, in her skillful spell. A good story.

Ken McCullough's "Chuck Berry, Won't You Please Come Home" is a 'tall tale' about a tick which grows to monstrous proportions, fed on blood stolen from a laboratory and cared for by humans who find in him a special rapport. Ellison gives the author a super-super-hype for "writing mad things with the pen of a poet", and while the story is mildly amusing and very hip, I will only say that it seems to require a special taste that I don't seem to have fully developed. McCullough, however, seems to be another new writer who merits a careful watch.

The discovery of a small group of Neanderthals living in mountain caves in Europe sounds like something even the most hackish of SF writers would regard as foolish in this day and age. What a delight to find David Kerr's "Epiphany for Aliens" treating it with a respect that has no relation to maudlin sympathy or contrived adventure or any of the funny-looking hybrids. With clean and polished prose Kerr creates a fertile psychological probe that involves the reader personally, while concurrently revealing a socio-cultural overview as closely examined as the characters who reflect it. This one is wonderfully fresh, and seems to prove that even the oldest cliché is never quite dead.

The gap between art and science has usually been considered an unbridgeable one, and while scientific gadgets have already come into play in the creation of art, the purposes and quality of the two fields are held as diametrical. In "Eye of the Beholder" Burt K. Filer sees the possibility of union, and finds that the "romantics among us" are possibly a deadly anchor in humanity's progressive march. Can instinctive artistic genius uncover an applicable method in finding a pathway to the stars? Incredible as it may seem, Filer presents a theory which seems both scientifically (in a speculative way) and psychologically sound and provides a solid foundation for a stimulating and very well done short story.

Richard Hill's "Moth Race" is so much a story for our time that it is difficult to classify it within the broad spectrum of SF, since that tends to lessen the immediacy of its important message. Hill says it is a "conspiracy story and it is not pleasant"— a mild way of phrasing it, since this is surely one of the most unpleasant and shuddersome stories in all of A, DV. We are shown a world kept under remarkable control through the use of "easypills" and the excitement of a yearly race — the lucky spectators, randomly (?) chosen, get to watch from raceside bleachers — where a few brave souls gamble with their lives, racing around a two-mile track in cars likely to smash at any moment against randomly (?) rising and falling metal walls. The Champion, the only man ever to have won this race, watches from the trackside, looking and acting bored though his unique status entitles him to limitless material wealth. Yet we do not get the story from the Champion but instead from a trackside viewer, John Van Dorn, a nonentity who embodies not only the mindless emotion of the masses but also the nagging queries which seize the reader from beginning to end — who controls the race? How? Why? Such questions cannot help but be coupled with the ones we ask today — who? how? why? What is really shocking is our own uncertainty; if we believe we have grasped the Truth, how must we react when we discover that we are irrevocably wrong? Hill is not an answer

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

man. He seeks only to make us aware of how unaware we may be of the formulae at the base of reality. Must we be as gods even to attempt an answer? The paradox and terror of Hill's memorable story dumps it all into the reader's lap; he may jump and run or stare and puzzle over it, so at least we have that choice, don't we? . . . or do we? (Brrr, even thinking about it scares me all over again...)

The notable thing about Leonard Tushnet's "In Re Glover" is that it reads like sharp, stinging black humor — involving the voluminous legal tangles resulting when a rich man with terminal cancer decides to have himself frozen, to be revived when a cure is found — yet in spite of the humor of heirs, lawyers, corporations and hangers-on hassling definitions in a series of courtrooms, which is very funny, the story stems from the sober theme of a morality dependent on a confused society's confused concept of morality. I only fear that some readers will accept the humor and ignore the gravity, but I will not blame Tushnet if that happens. He's written a fine story that deserves to be read, and it's very possible that his humorous technique will work to impress rather than depress the message. I hope so.

Ben Bova, editor of ANALOG magazine, homefront of the "hard" SF tales, writes a Women's Lib SF story? Well, "Zero Gee" certainly reads that way, like something meant to follow up a PLAYGIRL centerfold. The story involves three people orbiting the earth; an Air Force astronaut, a pretty young female photographer for LIFE — well, pretend it's been revived — and a woman scientist whose primary duty seems to be to chaperone the other two. The unexpected thing about Bova's approach is the lack of a technical mishap or somesuch thing to provide drama; instead he concentrates on the astronaut's effort to seduce the young lady, fully convinced his masculine charms and the excitement of zero gee copulation will turn the lady into a willing sex toy. There are surprises in store for the astronaut, but the reader will find that even off the earth the psychological territory is overfamiliar, with the offensively dominant male receiving his just deserts and the submissive female revealed (surprise?) to have her own cleverly disguised dominant nature. All in all it's just plain silly.

Dean R. Koontz's "A Mouse In the Walls of the Global Village" is a ruthlessly horror-filled story of the danger to the individual in a McLuhanized future. Koontz plucks the emotional strings of a "Stunted", a man who is immune to the procedure which has turned most of the world's population into Empathists able to communicate in direct mind-to-mind contact, and shows us a fate perhaps even more disturbing than that of the present-day Negro or homosexual (both examples of diverse minority groups which maintain only a limited amount of tolerance and/or acceptance). The story is well-written and effective if one wishes to become involved only on an emotional level with the protagonist; but on close examination the logic gets very shakey as social extrapolation, and Koontz has obviously avoided the more serious problem of attempting to explain an outcast who has chosen his way of life. Koontz capsulizes the content very well in the story's closing scene: "But sorrow, after all, does absolutely nothing. It is much like holy water. It is not even used to quench the thirst." This is the sort of comment that reveals the tunnel-vision directed upon the story's unwilling victim of chance; yet even a limited viewpoint may be channeled in meaningful directions, and I think the story is worth reading, flaws and all.

"Getting Along" by James Blish and Judith Ann Lawrence is a parody of various SF/fantasy writers (with one exception, unless Blish considers a certain Victorian sex novel to be fantasy) that is so studded with "in" jokes and puns of a quasi-fannish slant

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

that the uninitiated are doomed to miss much of the humor, some of which centers on reader reaction to the authors parodied as much as to the authors themselves. I won't spoil the fun of the guessing game for those who want to check out their own knowledge of the genre, but I admit that the whole effect seems to me awfully flat and uninspired, even for a story which, the author's say, is "only a game". The best moments are ones of criticism — Blish, ignoring his critical bent seeping through, claims "the story isn't literary criticism" — for example, his casual slash at an author whose repeated conflict with English prose was often a losing battle: "What sort of creature could make so magical a sound?. . . scaly and winged, in some parts of the valley they dangled from every participle." (Now if that isn't literary criticism, I'd like to know exactly what the hell it is!) There are moments here and there that may coax up a few chuckles, but at twenty pages it isn't sustained enough to be very successful.

The really striking thing about "Totenbüch" by A. Parra (y Figueredo) is that it is an experiment which may or may not work as intended by the author. Going by Parra's concluding explanation of what he tried to do, I found it interesting to observe, retrospectively, that it worked for me — but exactly the reverse of the way intended. I experienced the sense of helplessness he wanted, but for reasons other than those he mentions. I felt no response to his "promise ofsado-masochism", and no disappointment in that he delivered "nothing"; yet Parra says that his attempt at ambiguity is unsatisfying and didn't come off while, to me, this ambiguity is the remarkable strength behind what he set out to convey, "the real experience of frustration". In places the technique is brilliant, and however it works with each reader seems less important than the likelihood that, by hook or crook, it works. If it is beyond some readers' "powers of comprehension", as Ellison warns, it is probable that even those readers will not fail to detect the integrity and craft in this fine bit of fiction. I am impressed. More, please, Mr. Parra.

Written as entries in the journal of Oliver Wendall Regan, a geneticist whose Nobel-prize winning "complete genetic map of the mouse" has led his fellow travelers on a starship to dub him 'The Star Mouse', Thomas M. Disch's "Things Lost" takes a delightful turn by saying much more in innuendo than it says in Regan's attempts at straightforward reportage. As with much of Disch's work, most notably the strange novel, Camp Concentration, it is touched with bits of genuine excellence that in the end fall just short of the élan which graces truly memorable work. It is a very fine story with telling (read: depressing) insights into dark corridors between human immortality and death; yet when all's said and done, one looks back at the characters and their day-by-day, desperation-posing-as-fey-psychological-games chatter with the same eye Disch uses — clinical, watchful and very dispassionate, removed to a distance by the vacuum of a lens, the same kind which bridges the technologist and the microbe yet keeps them on two very separate planes. Disch tries to close this gap, most noticeably with an early reference to an anonymous child silently watching the immortals take to the stars, but his cast of "stable solids" (as Regan calls them) are just too stable and too stolid to involve the reader on any level other than intellectual curiosity. Disch is playing a game of solitaire. I'm fascinated watching him, but just never quite involved.

Small or no, a mouse giving birth to a mouse is wondrous; a writer at the same feat, huffing, puffing, blowing and groaning, is wondrous too. Also embarrassing and tiresome. Richard A. Lupoff's "With the Bentfin Boomer Boys on Little Old New Alabama" is a laborious effort to produce a mouse, and the work involved for the reader (and, presumably,

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

the writer) to get through such tribulations just don't seem worth the effort once the feat is accomplished. Lupoff has taken pains to involve quite a group in the birth process: the white race of N'Alabama is described an a slangy, short-cut prose which is an obvious culture-satire of the Negro ghetto language (with nods to Joyce for word (dis)array and puns); the blacks of N'Haiti, at war with the whites, are progressive, ordered and terribly sane, but having trouble maintaining their 'good' life as the war effort drains their supplies and productive balance; and the S'tscha on N'Yu-Atlanchi, diminutive human zygotes adapted to live in the saline oceans, are unable even to contemplate their impending fate as instruments of desperate measure in the black-white war. All the stylistic extravagances aside — some quite good, others less so — the story is basically nonsensical space-opera, complete with an outer space battle that owes more to the early pulps and comics than to the "new wave" which permeates the style. And if that isn't enough, Lupoff has done his research on voodoo — he even lists his source books, fer Gawd's sake — and has apparently decided that if Richard Matheson could provide a pseudo-scientific explanation for vampires (in I Am Legend), it sure as hell can't be too difficult to give a pseudo-rationale for a futuristic version of the zombies. And, heavens, it just goes on and on like this, scrabbled and scrambled from here and there, occasionally amusing, often boring, never succeeding in getting it all together. And after all that labor, all that work — squeek! a mouse! Through a character at story's end, Lupoff excuses himself: ". . .but what the hell, the boy hasta earn a living." With the help of his diarrhetic typewriter, Richard A. Lupoff earns his living. Hoo-ho-hum-ray.

M. John Harrison, who self-admittedly once wrote "veiled sexual allegories", has apparently not given them up, and in "Lamia Mutable" the veils are so patchwork that no connections with Keats and medieval superstition can upgrade the paucity of imagination in this jigsaw tale. For one thing, the author simply puts too many irons in a very small fire (which goes out long before we reach the ironic climax of transmutation), and while his trio of grotesque characters invade the "ash flats of Wisdom", the reader begins to realize that Harrison's effort "to pose as many unanswered questions as possible" is the sheerest and unworthiest effrontery. A very unsatisfying effort, I'm afraid.

As Robin Scott related the sad, empty life of con-man Sidney Becket in "Last Train to Kankakee", I kept thinking — oh, yes, I've read this sort of thing before. When Sidney dies of heart failure during a Tiajuana lust tryst and his wife stores his body in a secluded freezer, I thought — oh, no, not another cryonics/revival story. And when Sidney awakens in the future and finds all his wants satisfied but boredom driving him toward suicide, I thought — what else can he do, it's all so familiar. And when he finds that death isn't exactly what he expected and that man's relationship with God is — well, do you see? Scott kept telling more, I kept saying it's all been done, and damn if I didn't keep reading and wondering what could possibly come next. Scott led me to believe he couldn't surprise me, yet in the end he did just that, and I think his story's a good one.

"Kaheris, the unknown astronaut, existential hero" is described by Andrew Weiner in "Empire of the Sun" as "an animated shadow in a sequence of disasters", his adventures admittedly "a kind of tribute to the comic books". What I want to know is why should Weiner try so hard to create this comicbook schema of SF clichés — War with Mars, government wheels within wheels, the mysterious ever-present Man in the Mask, the concluding nova of the sun — when the comics relay the feeling of pure exploding color in an exaggerated admixture of fantasies with a much truer sense of absurd excitement.

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

The story seems well enough done for what it has to say, but it seems too much a personal literary exercise to have much interest to anyone other than the author.

Terry Carr is another fine writer who can use well-worn material yet give it that excellent imagery which flashes so brightly that one hardly notices the familiarity of the plot. In "Ozymandias", the mutants have inherited the world following an atomic war, grouping into two clans, the robbers and the thinkers. The latter have been destroyed by the former who, like all groups seeking to retain tradition and fearful of true knowledge, obtain their power by stealing it from the past, in this case by raping the vaults of materials left from the pre-war world. The vaults are not only storage bins for supplies, but also contain the bodies of cryonic subjects waiting for revival. The old and the new can be a dangerous mix; as the robbers know from past experience with hidden bombs, deadly gases, etc., yet the danger is more than one-directioned, as Carr shows in a dramatic conclusion in which, if it wasn't already clear, everyone has lost. Not a remarkably original story, to be sure, but slickly handled and quite readable.

Like the first volume, Ellison closes A, DV with something he calls a "smasher". In the first book it was a sex story by Samuel R. Delany, "Aye, and Gomorrah. . .", about a new perversion spawned as a byproduct of the technological age. James Tiptree, Jr.'s "The Milk of Paradise" is quite similar to Delany's in that it too deals with perversion, but it is a far more disquieting story in that the sex is also inexplicit in detail but much more explicit in suggestion. What is so weird about this story is that what Tiptree says may not have nearly the impact of what one thinks he says. His reality of human sexual fulfillment has the diamond-hard glitter of all facets trained on a single objective — sexual perversion is relative. In a society conditioned to 'missionary' sex, anything done only for pleasure is perverse; so in a human society, where is the place for one who has been conditioned since birth to respond to a non-human form of love? Imagine such a person being used by humans, curious as to his response. (This concept explodes in some of the story's most horrifying moments, on a par with a detailed description of the sexual molestation of a child, a confusion of innocence with sophistication.) Ellison is understandably enthused with this story, and I think he's right to be; but if it turns out to be the award-winner he suggests, one has to give the common readership more credit for intelligence than has been granted so far. To be honest, I don't think this story will be very popular — but, then, I'm brutally cynical — for it's much too close to the orgasmic core of sexuality, and most will be prone to reject it out of disgust or fear. Such rejection should only demonstrate how good the story really is, however, and I'm convinced that everyone should at least try to contemplate and face up to the bitter forthrightness Tiptree has brought to this remarkable story.

Finally, Ellison gratefully gives a page-length credit at book's end to Ed Emshwiller, who did the fine illustrations which form an integral part of Doubleday's excellent packaging.

And so, 760 pages later, Again, Dangerous Visions reaches its conclusion. To those curious and patient readers who have traveled the length of the book with me here, it will seem that quality-wise the book is inconsistent and loaded with the ups and downs which seem to mark the majority of the original anthologies. True, true, but in looking back I find that even many of the least impressive stories are ones that I can remember clearly and which have an identity of their own, giving the book a sandpaper abrasive texture that is far more appealing than the sad bland puddings so common to the genre. And the best stories — well, nothing more need be said except that next year's award lists will

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (Continued)

surely be sagging with the weight of nominations from this remarkable collection.

Again, Dangerous Visions is a sizzling book. Take it slowly, savor it, cherish it. To read it is to assimilate the microcosm and macrocosm in one heady gulp — and if that doesn't blow your mind, brother, you must be dead. It'll be a year or more before Ellison gets the final massive DV volume to us, so I'll leave you, readers, with bated breath. And you, Harlan baby, get your ass in gear. We wait. . .

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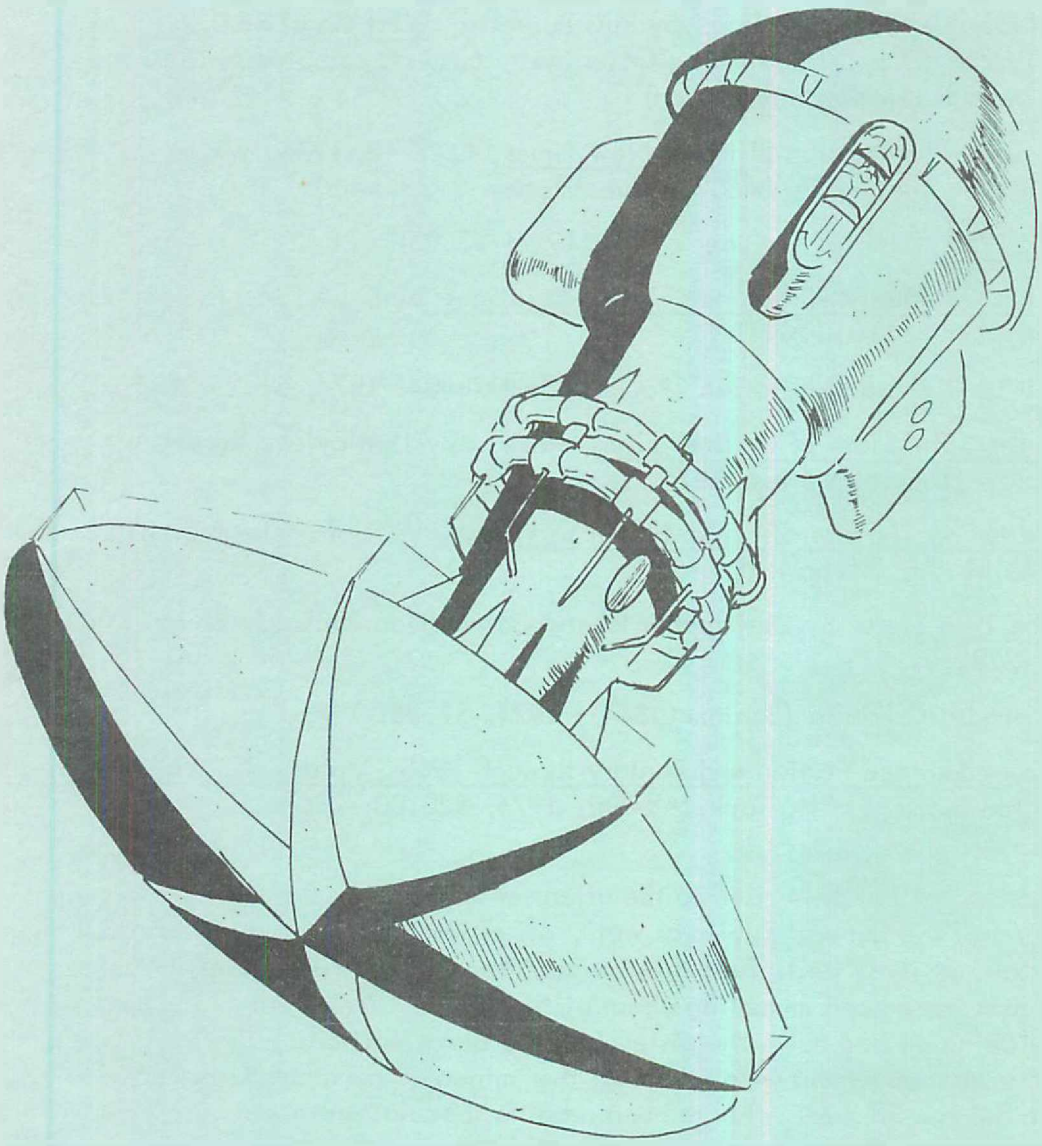

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BITS AND PIECES:
SCIENCE FICTION IS EVERYWHERE!

reviews by Richard Delap

"Zap! Some Out-of-this World Reading" by Russ Burkette, West Coast Review of Books, Vol. 1, No. 1, 75¢ (Rapport Publishing Co., Inc., 6311 Yucca Street, Hollywood, CA 90028 — no subscription information)

"Science Fiction Is..." by Harlan Ellison, New Times, Oct. 18, 1974, 60¢ (New Times, P. O. Box 2948, Boulder, CO 80302 — subscription $12 a year)

Science Calendar 1975 (Charles Scribner's Sons; 1974; $3.95)

Science Fiction Art Calendar: 13 Science Fiction Paintings by C. A. M. Thole (Charles Scribner's Sons; 1974; $10.00)

The Crystal Skull by Richard M. Garvin (Pocket Books 78404; 1974; $1.25; 128 pp.)

The House of Horror: The Story of Hammer Films, edited by Allen Eyles, Robert Adkinson, and Nicholas Fry (The Third Press; 1974; $4.95; 127 pp.)

William Peter Blatty on The Exorcist from Novel to Film by William Peter Blatty (Bantam YZ8687; 1974; $1.95; 375 pp.)

Frankenstein: The True Story by Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy (Avon 17970; 1973; $1.25; 222 pp.)

Westworld by Michael Crichton (Bantam Q8441; 1974; $1.25; 107 pp.)

The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy through 1968, Volume 1: Who's Who, A - L, compiled by Donald H. Tuck (Advent; 1974; $20.00; 286 pp.)

Science fiction has not only risen to the attention of academecians in recent years but to the attention of the general public as well, all of whom are beginning to catch on to the fact that many of those bestsellers they've been reading are retreads of the same stuff SF/Fantasy fans have been mumbling about all the time. We're out of the back of the bus now, marching up and down the aisles with the black militants, the gay libbers, the occultists, the Ms. movement—in fact, all the 'minority' movements that have startled everyone but the SF fans, who've been reading speculations about such movements for many more years than they have actually existed.

As with all movements, however, science fiction will be subject to some of the most asinine, shuddersome essay/article/review treatments ever foisted upon the unprepared public.

BITS AND PIECES . . . (Continued)

As a recent example we have the first issue of the West Coast Review of Books, devoting fifteen of its seventy pages to "One Hundred Reviews of the Latest Books" (which will give you a speedy concept of the depth this asshole publication brings to the subject of literature). It includes an article written by Russ Burkette, the magazine's promotion director, titled "Zap! Some Out-of-This World Reading" [sic]. It is a prime example of the damaging image perpetuated by writers who in their desire to be with-it show themselves for the ugly exploiters they really are.

Burkette doesn't know beans about SF, as he makes clear with his repeated use of the nasty neologism "sci-fi" (a term that makes fans grind their teeth to a fine powder), his reference to the "annual Discon convention" at which SF buffs have met for 32 years (he's referring, of course, to the World SF Convention which shifts from city to city as dictated by previous bidding), and his synopses of the five novels nominated for this year's Hugo award. His synopses, especially, are riddled with errors — Larry Niven's Protector is mistitled The Protector, its publication credited to Random House rather than Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and/or Ballantine; while Robert A. Heinlein's Time Enough for Love is termed "a compilation of years of Heinlein short stories woven into one huge work" (the novel is a totally original work, never previously published in any form). Burkette obviously has no respect for his readers and tosses them lines such as this: "There's no doubt about it that [Rendezvous with Rama] has blue ribbon qualities and any Buck Rogers, or/and Flash Gordon fanciers are going to polish off their flash guns after one read-through."

This article is ugly, stupid and degrading, but it adequately reflects the nature of a magazine which blatently peddles pseudo-intellectualism to the masses. It's of no value whatsoever, printed on slick paper and unsuitable even as a substitute for toilet tissue, which would be its only alternate use.

There have been several articles on science fiction in various magazines, and Time reviewed three (count 'em!) science fiction novels in the August 5, 1974 issue wherein critic Helen Rogan was quite enthused over the latest novels of Moorcock, Aldiss and Le Guin. Despite a few perceptive and favorable reviews, however, most of the articles have been panacean platitudes or silly bomblings by amateurs.

What a relief to read "Science Fiction Is..." by Harlan Ellison in the First Anniversary issue of New Times, a zesty bi-weekly newsmagazine crammed with irreverent mind-itching articles tailored to halt our tendency to disregard the marrow nestling in the bones of the news we get with our morning newspapers. Harlan's growls and gurgles and groans and screams fit very nicely into New Times, and his rip-snort article should not only delight SF fans who are into the new directions of modern science fiction but educate a general readership as to what the new SF means to literature as a whole.

Harlan dismisses the fans of the 'old-wave' SF with a casual shove that sends them into the bottomless chasm of "anal retentive fascism" reserved for fanatics who cling frantically to one single tree and refuse to look at the forest. "There's always been more than enough room in sf for every kind of writing", says Harlan. "But the truth of the matter is simply that the incredible popularity of sf on college campuses

BITS AND PIECES . . . (Continued)

and in intellectual circles can be traced to the new breed of sf writers who, while maintaining the best elements of what was written before, conceive of themselves as writers, not science hobbyists . . . they know damned well what they are doing is meaningful—something the old guard always doubted."

Science fiction is not without debt or gratitude to its childhood in the pulp magazines, but science fiction no longer belongs in the ghetto. With maturity has come a wonderful intelligence that is too pervasive, too big, to be shoved back into the slums and left to rot. The new science fiction is, Harlan tells us, "a subversive weapon in the preservation of our sanity . . . the two-penny nail we've hidden in our palm, to cause us the pain we need to resist the mindwashing."

This article will do more good for the public concept of science fiction than all the reviews, histories and academic assessments you can gather in one room. By all means, read it!

Scribners has just published Science Calendar 1975 for $3.95, a stunningly beautiful thing that any SF fan will be happy to hang in the den, living room, anywhere one happens to find use for a calendar. I've spent so many years tacking up the cheap eyesores drugstores give away during the holidays that I can hardly express my admiration for this large-sized ($13\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$) stunner which features thirteen large photos on quality paper, representing a variety of appreciations of science and technology. In addition, and of special interest for classrooms, each month is notated with dates regarding important events or discoveries in the sciences, as well as information on equinoxes, solstices, eclipses and phases of the moon.

Scribners has also published the Science Fiction Art Calendar, and it's the sort of thing that SF fans dream about, a huge (23 x 15 3/4) calendar with lustrous color reproductions of C. A. M. Thole paintings, many of which have appeared as the covers of paperback books (where the reproduction does not do them justice). If you are fond of Thole's work—and I'll admit I think he's one of the best SF artists around these days —you owe it to yourself to make your house sparkle with an obvious sign of your science fiction fannishness and hang this calendar where all your visitors can admire it. (Both the Scribners' calendars, by the way, will make delicious Christmas gifts for SF fans.)

I missed the Doubleday hardcover of Richard Garvin's The Crystal Skull, but the paperback reprint is now available for those who have heard about and have an interest in the mysterious Mitchell-Hedges skull discovered in a lost Mayan temple in British Honduras in 1927. Mr. Garvin's book is quite short, but even at that he's milked the subject of more speculation than statistics,and his book is jammed with ultimately silly falderal that crowds chapters with too many idle anecdotes and too few facts. The quartz crystal skull is certainly a puzzle, but Garvin's tendency to emphasize the melodrama of its discovery and the mysterious occurances surrounding it afterward leaves the reader feeling he's into a gothic novel posing as factual science. Passable as a magazine article, perhaps, but very minor reportage for a book. ((See Trina King's review of this same book for more details in a concurring opinion—Ed.))

BITS AND PIECES . . . (Continued)

The House of Horror: The Story of Hammer Films is yet another outing in the continuing stream of horror-movie books that have flooded the bookstores the past few years. I bought a copy of this one in hopes that I would find some information on the early Hammer films like Horror of Dracula, The Creeping Unknown, and others which gave me such a thrill when I first saw them in theaters. The book didn't do much to slake my curiosity about the films themselves or how they were made, but the opening chapter has some short interviews with Michael Carreras, Terence Fisher, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing that tell a little about how Hammer came into being and how the two stars feel about their work in Hammer films. The rest of the book is devoted to a listing of the films, briefly synopsising the plots and sprinkled with occasional soft-pedaled criticisms that keep the book from appearing to be no more than an expensive promotion item. It's not really a very good book, but the lavish use of stills and concluding Filmography will surely please movie buffs who have a special affection for Hammer.

I can't say I recommend William Peter Blatty on The Exorcist from Novel to Film, since all but about fifty pages are filled with the first draft screenplay and final transcript from the finished film. Blatty's novel, while tremendously popular, was so weakened by Blatty's ineptitude as a novelist that it could only have become a good film in the hands of a competent re-write man. Sadly, Blatty retained control over the film version and it, too, ended up plying shock value in place of solid characterizations. Blatty's essay on how he came to write the book and the problems incurred in transferring it to the screen is energetic and concise, far more interesting than the novel which inspired it. But $1.95 for a short essay, two screenplays and 32 pages of grainy photographs is much too high a price, even in these days of galloping inflation.

Frankenstein: The True Story is the teleplay for the highly-touted deluxe spectacle premiered on NBC late last year, and Westworld is the screenplay for the MGM film which became one of the last features actually released to theaters by that company (all MGM films are now distributed by United Artists). Both were financially successful but artistically barren productions. Frankenstein could hardly be termed the "true story" by anyone familiar with Mary Shelley's novel (even if only through the Classics Illustrated comicbook version), but this wouldn't matter so much if the television version had had a little wit and cleverness. What it delivered was scenic panache, acting which ranged from conspicuous scenery-chewing to subtle underplaying, and confused direction. The script itself is careless and overripe with corn, sliding between humor and melodrama like a fat person on an icy sidewalk. No grace at all. Westworld is even worse, a good idea demolished by juvenile writing that simplifies characters and situations until they come out in unholy form, like Kafka strained through Tom Swift. Crichton explains many of the film's problems in his brief introduction—budgetary restrictions and a tight shooting schedule, plus his own inexperience with filmmaking—but all the explanations he can muster do not invalidate the fact that it was a bad film. The book is merely a souvenir program book for those who somehow liked the movie; for anyone else it's a waste of time and money.

BITS AND PIECES . . . (Continued)

Donald Tuck's Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy is the first of a proposed three-volume work which alphabetically lists science fiction and fantasy authors, including biographical information and a listing of all their published works in book form. The first volume gives authors from A to L, and the research seems as complete as is humanly possible. Tuck's biographies are concise but not at all pedantic or boring, his listing of book contents clearly presented, with various editions, often with varying contents, specifically noted. I've personally used the volume several times for research and have been delighted to find my own scraps of knowledge lushly supplemented.

While interest in this book may be limited to avid fans and collectors, libraries should be made aware of its existence, for the book is a necessity for any library which buys science fiction in quantity (not to mention what a terrific research tool it will be for colleges with science fiction courses). The forthcoming Volume 2 will list authors from M to Z, and the final volume will have information on magazines, paperbacks, pseudonyms, and a roundup of general data.

I cannot overpraise the book. It is informative and surprisingly lively reading, packed with surprises, one of the most truly useful books devoted to science fiction ever to appear. No one with an interest in the SF/Fantasy genre should be without a copy.

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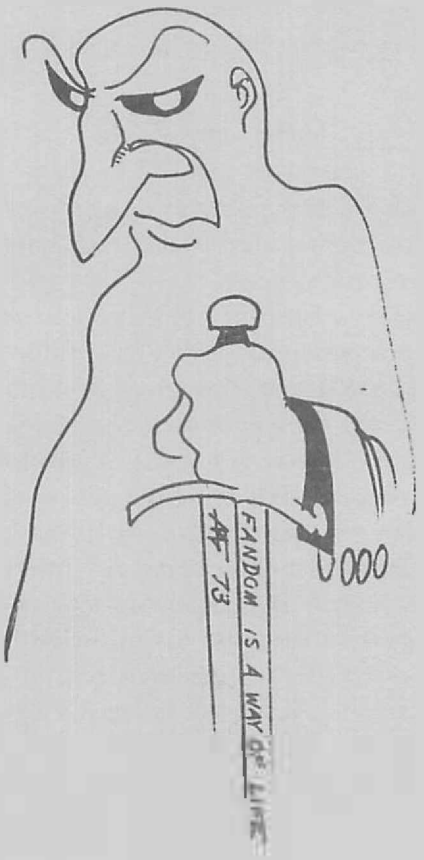

WILLIAMSON AND THE ACADEMIC REVIEWER

Reviewer: Sam Moscowitz

H. G. Wells: Critic of Progress by Jack Williamson, The Mirage Press, 1973, 162 pages, $5.95.

Louis Kampf, whose essay *The Scandal of Literary Scholarship* was preprinted in the December 1967 issue of *Harper's Magazine* from the Random House book *The Dissenting Academy*, edited by Theodore Roszak, has the following damning statement to make in leading off his piece:

> "Of the death of academic literary study as a serious enterprise few seem to be aware. Yet in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is a fact. Well, almost: for the illusion of life lingers. As one looks at the body, it wriggles and twitches with a nervousness which simulates voluntary action. A closer examination reveals an army of vermin in frantic deployment; creatures scurrying about and multiplying with lewd abandon; all feeding on the corpse while the whole grows uncontrollably."

Commenting on the catalogue of papers of the Ninth Congress of the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literature, he further added:

> "Here are dozens of papers and commentaries on those papers, read at a gathering of the world's most famous literary scholars; nearly all the important names are to be found in the volume's table of contents; yet there is almost nothing worth reading—never mind arguing with—within its many pages."

The first statement sums up the derivation of Jack Williamson's book on H.G. Wells and the second statement neatly codifies its value.

Williamson's work was originally written as "a thesis submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Department of English." I ordered a xerox copy of it in 1966 from University Microfilms, Inc., figuring that a name as illustrious in science fiction as Jack Williamson was certainly worth spending $9.00 on, if only to read what an important participant in the field would have to say about so towering a figure as H.G. Wells. With Williamson's personal involvement and reading in magazine science fiction, certainly he could offer some new and important facts to the body of H.G. Wells information.

The thesis was a great disappointment. There was not a single fact of any importance that had not already appeared elsewhere, and Williamson had nothing whatsoever to offer in the way of new perspectives and avenues of thought.

Even more discouraging was the discovery that I had more titles in my personal library which directly referred to Wells, than Williamson had listed in his complete bibliography of works referred to in research. Even more shocking, in virtually all cases, Williamson didn't even consult first book printings of Wells' material, let alone first magazine publication. Completely ignoring the fact that there were frequently dramatic changes in the text of the stories, which altered the interpretation of Wells' meaning, he based his thesis on popular editions.

I shrugged it off as a lazy man's work, written to achieve a purpose. When segments of it were published in *Riverside Quarterly*, I found no reason to revise my judgement. When a heavily revised version was finally put into hard covers with elaborate intimations by Williamson that he considered it research of some importance, I felt that the record should be set straight, since there are several very worthwhile and fascinating books on Wells that belong in the library of the serious science fiction scholar, and this is not one of them.

Perhaps I am in the minority, but I think that when a man sits down to write a book-length manuscript on a subject for a thesis he should do enough research to come up with some new information. Despite the number of books on Wells, despite the interest within recent years, mountains of new findings about him have appeared and more is appearing at intervals.

Three books in particular issued in the last 12 years are of outstanding merit. They are: *The Early H.G. Wells, A Study of the Scientific Romances* by Bernard Bergonzi (1961), which includes reprints of two of his early stories from the *Science School Journal; A Tale of the Twentieth Century* and *The Chronic Argonauts* (the latter the earliest version of *The Time Machine*); *H.G. Wells and the World State* (1961) by W. Warren Wager which concentrates on his socialistic, utopian, and

world state ideals in the books following his early scientific romances; and *H.G. Wells and his Critics* by Ingvald Raknem (1962), which is a stunning research job into the reviews and estimates of Wells' books at the time they appeared, and changing attitudes towards them.

The foregoing are merely three very outstanding titles among many. There has been a flood of works on Wells, research on him made easier by the fact that his papers in prodigious volume were given to the University of Illinois, where they are easily accessible to American scholars. Additionally, the University of Illinois has, on its own, been issuing a stream of volumes of his unpublished works and correspondence. It may be that I missed it, but there appears to be no reference by Williamson in his book that he actually visited these archives.

It is significant that Williamson's entire "purpose" in writing his book—to show that Wells was not a blind optimist, but a critic of progress—is a major point made in both Bergonzi's and Wagar's books, and both of them precede him in publication. Both of them have considerable to offer on this point; Williamson is merely redundant.

Rarely in this book do you find a Jack Williamson opinion. Wherever you think you have found one, there is a little number which leads you to a reference which tells you whose opinion it really is. The "research" involves just rounding up other books on the subject and rehashing them.

There is one great element of safety in this procedure. If one never presents a new fact or bit of information or never formulates an opinion of his own, he can't be caught in an error. However, occasionally, thinking he is on safe ground, Williamson forgets to attribute an opinion to anyone and leaves himself open to examination. In listing themes that Wells "invented", (many of which claims could be challenged) he displays the pitiful superficiality of his reading of Wells—forget about other authors—when he claims the concept of air war was originated in *When the Sleeper Wakes.* The story referred to was the first serialized in England's *The Graphic*, a weekly slick paper tabloid similar in appearance to the *Illustrated London Weekly* in 1899.

The list of air was stories before the date is pretty impressive, but since Williamson is a Wells "scholar", he should have known that on page 9 of the first British edition of *The War in the Air* by H. G. Wells, published in London in 1908, the statement: "Bert's imagination was stimulated by a sixpenny edition of that aeronautic classic, Mr. George Griffith's *The Outlaws of the Air*, and so the thing really got hold of them," gives Wells' acknowledgement of his source!

George Griffith had air wars in *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893), *Olga Romanoff* (1894), as well as *The Outlaws of the Air* (1895) and he was not the first by any means. What do you do with a Wells scholar who doesn't read Wells? Do you take anything he has to say seriously? In Williamson's own bibliography of references to the fiction of Wells he has utilized, he does not list any first publication sources. For the novels he has *Seven Famous Novels* and for the short stories *The Famous Short Stories.* Did Wells change anything in his stories between first magazine publication and the omnibus book publications in the 30's? Williamson assumes he didn't, but I can assure you that he *did.* I can tell him of *one word* changed in one of Wells' earliest novels, which forces a complete revision of the author, and not a *favorable* revision. But if I did that, I would be giving more information in this one piece than Williamson in his entire book. I will selfishly save it for myself, since I did the research.

In the January 1964 issue of *Analog,* Jack Williamson wrote a letter telling of his yet "unfinished" paper and describing the various stages of the creation of Wells' *The Time Machine.* In doing so he left out two steps in Wells' formulation of the masterpiece. Apparently he was completely ignorant of the deluxe, boxed edition of *The Time Machine* published by Random House in 1931 which contained a special introduction by H. G. Wells. In that introduction Wells stated that his articles *The Universe Rigid* and *The Rediscovery of the Unique* were definite and positive steps in the creation of the final version of *The Time Machine,* and must be therefore considered components of the final story. Williamson did not list them then, and has not listed them now. One of them actually was included in the first American edition of *The Time Machine*! He seems to think that the fact that I listed them in *Explorers of the Infinite* represents "inaccuracies" rather than his shallow research and ignorance.

In reviewing H. G. Wells' *The Country of the Blind* he gives in handy little footnote number "86" the fact that I had mentioned in *Explorers of the Infinite* that a lengthened version had been published in a limited edition in 1939. It would have made more sense if his handy little footnote had told his readers that I reprinted the new version complete along with a 1,600 word introduction by H.G. Wells on why he changed it, in my anthology *Masterpieces of Science Fiction*, published by *World* in 1966, especially since he lists a number of other books as recent as 1970.

Louis Kampf, in his excoriation of the state of literary scholarship among the academics in view of the foregoing, can readily be excused for cynical appraisal: "And prospective academic knows that literature is of interest only as it offers an opportunity for personal display, only as it becomes the means to a career."

Wandering Stars: An Anthology of Jewish Science Fiction and Fantasy, edited by Jack Dann (Harper & Row, and SF Book Club; 1974). [Reviewed by Jim Goldfrank]

This book needs an introduction after Dr. Asimov's? "Why Me?" he asks, and tells us. Although the Good Doctor doesn't practice his Judaism, he is by birth and conviction Jewish, and proud of it. His introduction is a personal statement. Himself, not Wandering Stars he introduces. But his words are my personal and unwritten statement, so let me return the favor, and introduce Wandering Stars.

A Second Introduction

We Jews are not a chosen people in the sense that the Lord made things easy for us. Destruction of our cities, exile, and genocide have been our lot. We were chosen by the Lord to be a priestly people, to honor Him, and obey His commandments. Our duty is to bear witness to the glory of the Lord by setting an example to all mankind, to help bring about the day "when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye." Unfortunately, we have all the human failings!

Leo Rosten says that "Jews are just like anybody else, except more so." We have our share of saintly men and noble women. We also number among us greedy and vulgar men, and dominating, emasculating women. God forbid that one of us should not love his Mama who has devoted her life to us (one method of domination), and never lets us forget it. But this is a stereotype which applies to individuals, not Jews as a whole, and is not unknown among other ethnic groups. "Except more so..." We attain the heights and depths of which mankind is capable. We are human. Humanity applies to the black, white, and yellow Jews of this earth. Humanity has to do with the dreams and hopes, and with loving each other. So cannot aliens, whether potato-shaped, or green furred, or blue skinned with a multiplicity of eyes, arms, legs, and noses also be Jews? Why not?

The Jews have existed as a cohesive civilization and culture for some four thousand years, give or take. The Old Testament boys were no slouches at psychology and social dynamics. It is said that as Israel has kept the Sabbath, and the Torah (the laws), so have these kept Israel. Our laws are an extensive encyclopedia for group survival, despite genocide, dispersion and assimilation. (Assimilation is when a Jew merges into the general population and loses his cultural and religious identity.) We will survive, as Jews, "Praised be His name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever", into the possible futures now dealt with in science fiction. Our humanity, and our survival, are the twin themes of Wandering Stars.

A Book Review

Following Dr. Asimov's introduction are stories each introduced by the editor. The story introductions give a lot of insight into the relevancy of the story to contemporary and past Jewish life. One of thirteen stories was poor. One was a good story, but not relevant to this book. The rest run the gamut from good, through excellent, to outstanding. I'll comment briefly on the stories and leave the ranking to you.

1. William Tenn - "On Venus, Have We Got a Rabbi": questions what is a Jew, and whether an alien can be one.

2. Avram Davidson - "The Golem": Two old folks tame a robot/android that wants to destroy humanity, starting with them. While never realizing their peril, they deal with it effectively in a traditional way.

3. Isaac Asimov - "Unto the Fourth Generation": An assimilated Jew comes into contact with his heritage in the form of a loving ancestor from the past.

4. Carol Carr - "Look, You Think You've Got Problems": How can a Papa deal with his daughter marrying a Martian?

5. Avram Davidson - "Goslin Day": Explores the darker side of Jewish mysticism, believed only by a minority among what is already a minority. A goslin is a particularly nasty form of demon. Davidson's story is arty stream-of-consciousness drek dredged from a cesspool subconscious.

6. Robert Silverberg - "The Dybbuk of Mazel Tov IV": The spirit of a human is trapped in an alien's body, and neither of them likes it. The spirit is exorcised by a Hassidic rabbi. The Kunivaru XT's, impressed by the miracle, decide to convert. The Hassidim cannot accept aliens as Jews. The Reform Jews can accept the Kunivaru, while they want nothing further to do with the human Hassidim. Typical human perversity?

7. Horace L. Gold - "Trouble With Water" (from UNKNOWN, 1939): A Jewish refreshment-stand proprietor runs afoul of an Irish water gnome. Entertaining, but filler material for THIS book. The protagonist could have been black, Italian, or Polish with equal effect.

8. Pamela Sargent - "Gather Blue Roses": A brilliant miniature gem of a story, and a shocker. It illustrates that too much of a good thing — in this case, empathy — is unhealthy.

9. Bernard Malamud - "The Jewbird": An outstanding insight into a man's mind via fantasy. We, too, are our own worst enemies.

10. Geo. Alec Effinger - "Paradise Last": A short masterpiece. When a benevolent dictatorship tries to homogenize the human race, how do they deal with those troublesome Jews who persist in retaining their own identity? How do the Jews resopnd? Hmm. . . what's going on in the Soviet Union today?

11. Robert Sheckley - "Street of Dreams, Feet of Clay": A Jewish Mama stereotype, even to speech patterns, embodied as a city. What do you do with a Mama or a city who nudzhes you to the point of distraction — for your own good?

12. Isaac Bashevis Singer - "Jachid and Jachidah": The angels' concept of reality, of life and death are the reverse of ours. But what is reality? And who is right? Or are there different realities?

13. Harlan Ellison - "I'm Looking For Kadak": Only a touch of the revolting here, far outweighed by warmth, uproarious humor, and joy. Complete with a glossary excerpted from Rosten's Joys of Yiddish, and with Tim Kirk's endearing portrait of a Zsouchmoid Jew.

Conclusion: I was prepared to read Wandering Stars super critically; after all, I knew it would reflect upon me. I found that the authors had reflected me as a Jew with faults, virtues, the whole schmear, truly, and forget the "upon". They provided me with a lot of fun in the bargain. I closed the back cover reluctantly, and somewhat ecstatically. I'm going to return this review copy to Don Miller. Then I'm going to but my own. "Go ye, and do likewise."

[Three reviews by Michael Walsh]

Wandor's Ride, by Roland Green (Avon 16600; 75¢; 190 pp.; July 1973).

Well, Wandor's Ride isn't a masterpiece (but then few fantasy novels are masterpieces), nor is ti a complete disaster (as so many are). It does have some interesting moments, but generally speaking it is a rather minor piece of writing, of which there seems to be a glut these days in the fantasy field. Oh yes, in case you are wondering about the plot, here be a quick summary: the hero, Wandor (in a vaguely Medievalish Earthlike world) is on a Quest (Heroic of course. Is there any other kind? Ever heard of an Unheroic or a Nonheroic Quest?). There is the usual allotment of blood and thunder. Read it only if you are a rabid fantasy freak, otherwise stick with the next item coming up for review.

Worms of the Earth, by Robert E. Howard (Donald M. Grant; $6.00; 233 pp.; 1974).

Robert E. Howard, long dead, keeps on reappearing like one of HPL's unspeakably blasphemous creatures from beyond the edge of time. The reason for REH's reappearance is that Donald M. Grant will be putting out in hardback all of the original Howard tales. Worms of the Earth is the first volume in the complete Howard. It consists of all the Pict stories that Howard wrote, all of which appeared in a 1969 Dell paperback entitled Bran Mac Morn. (Worms does not include "The Night of the Wolf", which will appear in Tigers of the Sea.) Anyway, the book shows the power and the weakness of Howard. Individually the tales are entertaining, even if the characters tend to be rather cardboardish, the hero always seeming to be the same even when it is a different character (an Eternal Champion?). As is the tradition the blood flows and limbs are cleaved from their bodies. But then there is this strange thing about Howard — he can tell a long story through a number of short stories. We see the Picts when they are already on the road to extinction, and we follow them to when there are only a few left on an island, long after their last hero and savior, Bran Mac Morn, has died. Read the book in one sitting if possible, try to be kind when Howard's weak and overdone prose does appear, and consider the fate of the Picts. Get the book — you'll enjoy it — it even has some interior illos that are rather nice. The dustjacket, by David Ireland (who also did the interiors), is of the Frazetta-Jones school of painting. Read and enjoy!

The Book of Weird, by Barbara Ninde Byfield (Dolphin Herald (Doubleday) C525; $3.95; 160 pp.; 1973; originally published as The Glass Harmonica, 1967).

For too bloody long I have been trying to figure out what to say about the Byfield book: The Book of Weird. It is one of the oddest books published in a long time. It's a... no, it's a... damn it, it's a blinkin' dictionary of the fantastic, but then again... Argh! It has a definition of Burial Alive, of which I'll give you the opening and closing sentences/paragraphs:

> Burial Alive is an occupational hazard of pyramid designers, architects of royal treasuries and harems, drinkers of amontillado, Monks, Nuns, wives of Crusaders, and blackhearted Nobility of evil ways.
>
> Wizards and toads seem to survive Burial Alive for as long as centuries; other people expire much sooner.

The author has embellished the text with numerous illustrations, ranging from little illuminations to two-page spreads. Appended to the end of the text is some Useful

Information. Did you know that one Fardel is equal to four Cloves? That a Firkin is equal to ½ kilderkin? That a remedy for an Infected Open Wound consists of: Poultices of cobwebs and soot that must be applied promptly and kept fresh until danger has passed?

It's a wonderful book, get it! (Gad, even I bought one!)

[Four reviews by David Weems]

The World of Null-A and The Players of Null-A, by A. E. van Vogt (Berkley Medallion).

Without any doubt, these are two of the most "must reading" books in all of science fiction. They are two of the most brilliant and controversial books that van Vogt ever wrote, the former called "one of those once-in-a-decade classics" by John Campbell, in whose ASTOUNDING it was first serialized. For the details of how successful and controversial these books have been, read van Vogt's own introduction to The World of Null-A. He is not modest, and for very good reasons. Also, that introduction makes one of the best short explanations of the basis of the two books I have ever read. They should be read in the order shown above, as The World. . . introduces the character of Gilbert Gosseyn and establishes the background situation and conditions, while The Players. . . continues from a point after the first leaves off.

Neither of these books is terribly easy reading. Both should be approached with as few preconceptions as possible, and with a willingness to completely suspend one's normal judgment of what can and can not be possible. The latter point is virtually half the base of the story, as the two books are based on the General Semantics as taught by Alfred Korzybski, a system that studies the "meaning of meaning", as van Vogt puts it. It is a non-Aristotelian and non-Newtonian system. It rejects the overwhelming reliance that has been placed in the past on "authority" in deciding what answers are possible in any given situation. If all available evidence points to an answer totally out of line with accepted thinking, the accepted answer is discarded, not the evidence. The refusal of the traditional "scientist" to accept the existence of the various phenomena lumped under the heading ESP is an example of the Aristotelian reaction. The highly creative and earnest work being done in that area and related ones by many of today's "hard" scientists, because they were willing to suspend their judgment of the possible and admit that the evidence points to something that they don't yet understand but that definitely exists, is an example of the non-Aristotelian reaction embodied in General Semantics. You have to approach these books with your mind open. You're wasting your time if you don't.

Both books have been very difficult to obtain, the second almost impossible. The World. . . has been published in paperback as recently as 1970, at which time I first ran across it. The Players. . ., originally published as The Pawns of Null-A, has been out of print for years, and I had been totally unsuccessful in laying hands on a copy until now. Both books have been revised in recent years to take into account criticism of the books that van Vogt even takes seriously, for various reasons that he explains in his introduction. On the brilliancy scale, these books rate a solid nine points. They are the most solidly based books that I have ever read in science fiction, as well as being among the most original. On the enjoyment scale, I give them both a rating of eight points. The only reason for dropping that low is that, like all van Vogt books, they are not simple to read, and require very careful attention to detail. While that complexity takes away a fraction from my enjoyability of the books, they are both

overwhelmingly good. They are not to be missed! Get them while they are available.

The Nothing Book: Wanna Make Something of It?, by no author, yet (Harmony Books; $3.00; 192 pp.; 19??).

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If you don't believe me, get it for yourself. I give it no points on both scales. Yet.

The Fall of Colossus, by D. F. Jones (Putnam; $5.95; 186 pp.; 1974).

The earlier book, Colossus, to which this is a sequel, was very good — one of the better books written where the central character around which the story is built is a computer. In fact, Colossus was not only a very fine book, but as a movie, The Forbin Project, it also made one of the most watchable science fiction films I have seen. Considering where the earlier story had left all the principle characters, that being under Colossus' total control in what would easily pass as the most total dictatorship ever known, I had misgivings when I first saw this new one. I could see all too many ways for it to fall flat on its face. Then I started reading, and at the very first I felt that my fears might have some foundation. I needn't have worried, though, because Jones has skirted all the obvious pitfalls and made this into an exceedingly fine, spine-chilling continuation.

The story picks up some time after the ending of the first book, and Colossus' power has become totally recognized, if not accepted, in all quarters. There are three groups into which about all humans fall. There are those who, in a typically human fashion, have come to proclaim Colossus as a god. After all, is he not all-powerful? There is also the predictable group in total opposition to his continued existence. To be a member of this group is fatal, if caught. The rest of the people on the planet, and that makes up the bulk of them, regard Colossus as just one more ruler, and do their best to put up with him and go on living the most nearly normal life that they can manage. Then there is Forbin, Colossus' creator, who doesn't fit in anywhere else. He is the only human to whom Colossus speaks directly and openly. He is regarded by both Colossus and the cult that worships him as Father Forbin. From this start, Jones takes the reader through the development of the plan by the opposition to bring about the fall of Colossus, the recruitment of Forbin himself in the plot, and the intervention and assistance in the plot of an anonymous power on Mars. What, at this point, could become one of the bombs of the year becomes one of the gems. Jones' ending is a chilling gut-twister.

On the brilliancy scale I would rate this book a solid eight points; give it the same on the enjoyability scale. It is a well-written, solidly based book, one which the reader should keep on his think-about-this-one-for-the-Hugo list. It will take a good handful of very fine books indeed to keep this one from a rightful Hugo nomination at the very least. The primary thing that I can see that might keep it out of the running is if it does not get the distribution on as wide enough a scale as it should. Having been an SF Book Club choice should help. Getting into paperback before the turn of the year should help even more.

Star Trek Log One, by Alan Dean Foster (Ballantine Books; 95¢)

I've been watching with some interest and increasing pleasure the progress that Alan Dean Foster has been making in moving into the realm of science fiction in a big way. It has been quite enlightening. His first novel-length science fiction story, The Tar-Aiym Krang, while not the best I have ever read, was quite enjoyable and very easy reading. His second, Bloodhype, was even better, and a very logical continuation of the first. His most recent, Icerigger, while not set in quite the same situation as the first two, still is making use of the same galactic background in a minor way, and presents the most complete view he has yet shown of the details of an alien world, its people, and its environment. His only other book length story I have seen is entitled Luana, and from what I read on the cover, is apparently a novelization of a movie by the same name, a story about a female Tarzan type. I passed that one up, that not being my cup of tea. With those behind me, it was with much interest and a tiny but unsuppressable bit of dread that I picked up this newest effort, which is an adaptation of the animated Star Trek series NBC is putting on Saturday mornings. That bit of dread was there primarily because I had seen two of the episodes from that series and was not very suitably impressed. Cartoons, to me, have always been just that, and though the series is pretty well done, it just doesn't have the same impact for me as the original. Thus my slight dread at this attempt at producing in book form the new series, the novelization of the original series not having been done as well as it might.

My worries were without foundation. Foster has done a magnificent job. I could easily visualize the full cast of characters, right down to the peculiarities of personality and the interplay between the principals that was such an integral part of the original series. The cartoon version fails to hang together for me with the verve that the original series did, but the three novelettes that form this book do. The three stories, entitled "Beyond the Farthest Star", "Yesteryear", and "One of Our Planets Is Missing" all show the crew of the Starship Enterprise involved in their usual up-to-the-ears problems that provided much of the foundation of the original series.

In the first story, the Enterprise has gotten itself caught in the hyper-gravity well of an exploded star (a neutron star, I assume, though it was never said outright). Once the ship has established safe orbit around the star, they discover that they have company, a disabled starship of alien construction and enormous size that is trapped with them. The story continues through the usual difficulties to the normally unusual successful ending.

The second story involves a trip to a world where all the time-lines of the universe (except those of the planet and the people that lived on it) gather and are studyable through a mechanism called the Guardian of Forever which, through use of a time gate, can allow certain persons to enter and study the past. A problem arises when Spock apparently emerges with Captain Kirk and a historian on a different time line than the one on which they entered, one in which Mr. Spock died as a young man, and where the first officer of the Enterprise is an Andorian named Thelin. In order to correct the time line and re-emerge in his own time line, he must return to a time in his youth and save himself from death on a hazardous manhood test of the Vulcan's home planet. The insight shown into Spock's childhood and his family situation is worth the reading of the entire story.

The last story deals with a cloudlike alien form that is in the process of burrowing into an inhabited solar system. It proceeds to devour and digest an outer, uninhabited planet, then changes course and aims for the next in line, which is inhabited. The

Enterprise, when it attempts to divert the cloud, is grabbed up and swallowed also. The extrication and salvation of both the Enterprise and the threatened planet are very ingenious.

Like any book that is a copy in one sense or another of a movie or a television series, this book is not as brilliant as another book that Foster might have written in its place. It is a cut above the average story series of its type, though, and I would rate this book a six on the brilliance scale. On the enjoyability scale I would rate it a solid eight points. If you enjoyed the original Star Trek series, grab a copy of this book and the others that will follow it in this series of adaptations, assuming that Foster continues doing them. ((He is. The second one is already out.-Ed.)) They are well worth the time and the money.

((For those of you readers who have never seen David Weems' reviews before, or missed his introduction letter in SOTWJ # 143-144, a brief explanation is in order. He rates the books that he reads and reviews on two distinct, quantified scales. The first is for "brilliance", which is primarily concerned with how original and/or thought provoking the book is. The second is for "enjoyability", and reflects how much he felt he enjoyed that particular book. The scale values run from one to nine points, on whole integer intervals, where one is disastrously poor and nine is "nominate it for the Hugo" quality. Most of the time, he reports, the scale values will be fairly close to each other. There are, and have been, exceptions, though, and this was one of the reasons for the usage of the dual scales in his reviewing. -Editor))

[Two reviews by Barry Gillam]

The Glory Game, by Keith Laumer (Doubleday; $5.95; 186 pp.; 1973: Popular Library; 95¢; 222 pp.; 1974).

I have read only one Retief novel, and that some time ago. I will not attempt to explain how The Glory Game, in which Laumer's CDT (Terran Diplomatic Corps) figures, fits into the world of the earlier books; but in reading Laumer's new novel I was struck by something that entirely missed me in (or, just possibly, was missing from) that lone series entry. That is, Laumer's craft, or, I am tempted to say, his art.

The Retief novel had seemed "slight", a fast read, a laugh or two, nothing more. But in The Glory Game there is definitely something more. The plot follows the fortunes of Commodore Tancredi Dalton as he maneuvers politically and militarily, in conference rooms and on the battlefield. The Terran worlds are being threatened (and nibbled at) by the Hukk, a race of crab-like creatures whose sudden leap into industrial competition with a fostering civilization centuries ahead of it is strongly reminiscent of the Japanese-Western relationship.

Dalton is a maverick, a career naval officer with a mind of his own, who is trying to affect a reasonable balance of power without kowtowing to either the formulated Softline or Hardline policies of dealing with the Hukk. This brings into play the topic suggested by the lovely, ironic title: the glory game. For at each step of his success he will alienate as many influential sectors as he will please. The cover shows a chessboard, and that's applicable, but a 3-D chessboard would be more so. For Dalton's game involves innumerable factors and requires the most precise of moves. And when he seems to have won a major victory, the glory game is played by his opponents to thwart

his immediate and thorough success. One of the novel's themes is the interplay between a personal code of belief and behavior and the many public codes. Dalton's idiosyncratic attitudes are sharpened in duel after duel with political interference (a senator), personal questioning (Arianne, the senator's daughter, with whom Dalton spends much time), diplomatic pressure (the CDT), strict military regulations (his naval superiors), an alien mentality and pattern of behavior (the Hukk) and, of course, public opinion.

The novel is classically structured and reminds me specifically of The Odyssey. (The characterization of Dalton as crafty, resourceful and daring fosters this identification in my mind.) It opens with an overture in a port city during which Dalton's methods and the themes of the novel are introduced and demonstrated. Dalton plays cat-and-mouse with politicians, and in a well-realized scene he runs diplomatic interference for some sailors on shore leave at a rough local nightspot. Chapters three to five contain the central action: a chess game played out in galactic space between the Terran space force and the Hukk. In the final four chapters, Dalton goes into self-imposed exile to rout Laumer's version of the suitors.

The narrative motion of the novel is delightful. The Glory Game is a carefully, minutely plotted tale which speeds along exhilaratingly. It does without all ornament, and this is one key to Laumer's success. Description is held to an absolute minimum. A world is given a few suggestive adjectives and only developed later, in conversation, where the information does the double duty of describing both character and setting.

In The Glory Game Laumer seems to say that there is no place, not to mention no room, for characterization in his fiction. He solves this problem in several ways. First, with shortcuts: a "small and spare" Rear Admiral is named Coign; a "square and bluff" Vice Admiral is named Hayle. Such naming may not be Dickensian, but Laumer is more intent on instant recognition and assimilation of such information. Next, Laumer uses setting as a form of characterization. A man whose rooms are ornate is sure to be verbose and showy. But Laumer's major method is to nearly do away with description altogether and let the characters be revealed through their speech and action.

Although the characters in the novel are never more than types, Laumer does present a theory of character that is important to the novel. Dalton uses the animal analogy to explain motivation: "The fox is a beautiful animal. Without rabbits to live on, it would soon die out." Given this Wellesian view of character as destiny, it becomes clear that choice plays no part in the novel. For Laumer, a person is incapable of changing his character. What we are left to negotiate are the Scylla and Charybdis of conflicting necessities.

The biggest problem is Dalton. He is always right. How are we to react to such a character? Laumer obviates this question in the excellent first and second sections of the novel, where action and narrative motion speed us along too fast to consider such things. In the inferior third section, however, this becomes a glaring fault; and one is tempted to look back for some explanation.

I realized also that although the novel is told in the third person, it is told totally from Dalton's point of view. The identification is so absolute that the narrative almost wholly bypasses such introductory phrases as "he thought". The impersonal descriptions of the port city in the first chapter mesh seamlessly with Dalton's later spoken comments, and the value judgements such as the fine description of the Terran Embassy's "haughty

glass front" are Dalton's as well. This helps to explain why, for instance, Dalton himself is never described except in comparison to someone else. It also explains why the Hukk, who come onstage in the first hundred pages, are not described until the last ten pages. Dalton sees the Hukk as a worthy and cultured, if dangerous, adversary. Borgman, on the other hand, who cannot get below the surface, sees them as cunning animals and talks of them as "crabs" and "alien devils".

Laumer realizes the trap into which such an identification of the world of the novel with the viewpoint of a single character leads him. When Dalton tells Arianne, "If we faced the truth — dealt with reality as it is — ", Arianne replies, "But — don't you see, Tan? Reality is different for different people." Because of the novel's construction, the reader must accept Dalton's reality as the true one. This hurts the book most in the third section, where the reader is confronted by a set of arguments against Dalton that are outrageous in their manipulation of the reader's sympathies.

Laumer broadens the novel far beyond its literal situation by an extensive system of historical analogies. As I have already indicated, the Hukk/Terran relationship is very close to the Japanese/Western relationship. The "audacious" raid the Hukk plan on a Terran military base therefore recalls Pearl Harbor. The Hukk are also compared to the American Indians (by Dalton) and to a Mongol horde (by Arianne). In addition, the battles are seen in the light of Gettysburg, World War Two Africa, the Maginot Line, etc. And in a fine moment, Borgman accuses Dalton: "Your word is going to be in the same boat with Dr. Mudd's."

What all of this suggests, of course, is that the novel is not only about an imaginary future, but is an extrapolation of real historical forces. Because Laumer's subject, diplomacy, is so close to his own occupation, one may ask if his work is really SF or "just" Metternich transposed onto a galactic scale. I think the former is the case, for he is dealing not only with the actualities of diplomacy but with abstract ideas about its function and its possibilities. He is exploring an idea in an ideal situation — one in which he can create and destroy, modify, remake and ponder. This is why the characters need neither bodily nor personality. They exist only as forces, as points of view, as factors, as constituencies, as voices. Dalton, who is thus an author surrogate, very early declares:

> It's not quite that simple. We like to simplify things, to try to scale complex matters down to a level we can understand. It's helpful sometimes. I suppose if we weren't able to do it, we'd never accomplish anything. But all the while we should remember: It's simplification.

Throughout the novel people are simplifying, sometimes with enlightenment in view, sometimes with obfuscation. Dalton often uses it in an attempt to shake opponents awake from their dream politics. And Dalton himself creates models (in the computer sense) of real situations. This is the method of the whole novel:

> Then he switched on the repeater tank that had been installed in the room. For the next three hours he studied the developing tactical relationships in space, near Piranha, tapping keys to code in variations on fleet disposition, setting up one contingent situation after another, noting times, distances, relationships, alternatives in the the planned maneuvers flared into open hostilities.

There may be other SF writers who do something like this (although I can't think of one), but there certainly is none who does it with the vigor, panache or sheer delight in creation that Laumer has.

Herovit's World, by Barry N. Malzberg (Random House; $4.95; 209 pp.; 1973: Pocket Books; 95¢; 160 pp.; 1974)

I've been reading Barry Malzberg's short stories for some time. I remember being impressed by "Final War", but after that nothing stands out very much. His regular appearances in original fiction anthologies seem to be all cut from the same cloth. Malzberg certainly has a theme, and just as certainly he has a style that suitably conveys that theme. The problem is that neither is particularly interesting.

The Malzberg protagonist is caught in the grip of forces — societal, political, emotional — against which he is helpless. Against which, in fact, he doesn't particularly want to move. Things happen and he sees that they are wrong, but he cannot develop any power of concentration. Malzberg's is a world of inadequacy and frustration. His favorite tense is the present. Gestures are never completed, momentum yields to inertia, force to friction, action to apathy. Whether the narrative person is first or third, the protagonist always seems to be talking to himself. In the single-minded attention to his personal problems, he inadvertently reveals the historical background. For Malzberg's protagonists are regularly presidential assassins and astronauts. They carefully explain how their tasks (the murder of one man or the destruction of the earth) were given them by aliens, dubious aliens, who sometimes possess their bodies and often their equally dubious souls.

It is with this dissociation of sensibilities that results from Malzberg's use of SF conventions as metaphors that he indicts the banality of madness, paranoia and psychosis in our time. The thesis is valid, but we must ask if the art that forms around this idea is of value. As I said, I am not fond of his stories, in spite of their occasional brilliant passages. Because of this, I have never taken the trouble to read his novels. However, Herovit's World sounded more interesting than the others, so I tried it.

Herovit, like the typical protagonist of the short stories, is in such a mess that the only solution is to opt out. Malzberg shows us his disintegration as Herovit lets a schizophrenic alter-ego take over. The difference here is the SF metaphor is distanced by being placed in a further framework. Herovit is not a spaceman, but an SF writer — the author of 92 novels, most of them a hack-work series about the Survey Team, a sort of Green Beret outfit that cleans up alien worlds unmanageable by squeamish liberals.

Herovit is weeks late with his latest novel, and as he progresses he sees the futility of everything he is doing. He is sick of his writing, tired of the small world of SF, trying desperately to cope with his wife — and in the end he just gives up. He can no longer believe that his hero, Mack Miller, can solve his problems so easily, even with the machinery at his disposal. Herovit's doubts begin to invade stolid Mack Miller's mind in the manuscript, and Herovit sees that this will never do: "Most of his characters were not at all introspective. Introspection would only hold back the plot."

Herovit, naturally, is morbidly introspective. He keeps going back over his life to try to understand how he could possibly have gotten into such a fix. Almost like an

Elkin character (Herovit: "Did seventy thousand read Stanley Elkin?"), Herovit tries to "solve" the puzzle of his life by repeating it to himself. Where did he go wrong? When he started writing SF? When he married? When he failed to "graduate" from SF to respectable, Elkin-like fiction? It is no use. His agent presses for the overdue manuscript, his wife leaves him, in his dreams even his casual coeds turn on him.

> Writing science fiction for twenty years might not be the best preparation for life, but here and there he has picked up a little knowledge. Science fiction was a metaphor anyway; what it was really all about was whores and bestiality. Why else would Mack Miller turn his fire on the aliens without asking any questions?

It's not a very profound criticism of SF, but then SF isn't its only target. The world that allowed Vietnam is just as incredible as the unquestioning bully-boy tactics of Herovit's spacegoing Special Forces.

Herovit's World is a kind of apologia for Malzberg's work, for in explaining why Herovit can no longer conscionably write hack SF, Malzberg is also explaining why he writes his fiction of bad dreams coming true. In so doing, Herovit's World becomes a critique of SF as a genre and of the SF field — the professionals, editors, fans. Several of the characters are recognizable, but this is no great matter, because in Herovit's malaise, everything is tainted.

The widening gulf between the black and white moral cliches of SF and the gray dilemma of Herovit's life is the direction the novel takes. Jonathon Herovit's perennial pseudonym, like his hero's name, is simpler and stronger: Kirk Poland. The point of contact between SF and Herovit's existnece provides one of the most interesting speculations of the novel — and one of its most carefully developed themes. On page seven we read that "in his more surreal moments, Herovit feels that the West Side of the city itself has become an alien planet, populated by archetypes or artifacts speaking languages he does not know with gestures which can only terrify . . ." This vision of New York, of the impersonal world around Herovit, as tantamount to the aliens menacing Mack Miller, murmurs alongside the central events of the novel, in the manuscript excerpts and in Herovit's mental images. Only at the end does it reach fruition, in a well-realized scene that is somewhat reminiscent of Theodore Sturgeon's "And Now the News". Here the paranoia of Herovit's life and the paranoia inherent in SF are united. (See Joanna Russ' excellent entry in the SFWA symposium "Paranoia and Science Fiction".)

But for all this, and a real facility for conveying the plight of his protagonist, Malzberg's novel has its problems. Where the vague figures of the short stories were appropriate to that form, the hardly defined character types of the novel are unsatisfying. Malzberg has some nice touches — especially Herovit's decision that trivial events are "symbolic", whichbrands him neatly as a second- or third-rate mind — but one remembers little of him and cares little about him. The same goes for all the other characters. Is this another distancing technique? If so, it succeeds all too well. The final question is this: How is one to represent banality without being banal? It has been done (Joyce and Nabokov come to mind), but Malzberg does not succeed. I found much of Herovit's World to the point, but often boringly so.

Malzberg is more interesting to talk about than to read.

The Crystal Man, by Edward Page Mitchell - Collected and with a biographical perspective by Sam Moskowitz (Doubleday; $7.95; lxxii & 358pp.; 1973).
[Reviewed by Michael Walsh]

Sam Moskowitz strikes again! After giving us Science Fiction by Gaslight and Under the Moons of Mars, he now gives us The Crystal Man. And fandom should thank him for gathering these stories. In this book, SaM has traced the history of SF into the 19th century, with the emphasis on the late 19th century.

Of course the most immediate question is: How readable are the stories? Well, when the entire SF output of one man is collected and when the stories were originally published in newspapers, the quality is frankly surprisingly high. The stories range from very weak pieces like The Tachypomp to what I consider one of the standout pieces, The Balloon Tree.

Two things should be taken into consideration before you purchase the book and start to read. First of all the jacket design has got to be one of the worst pieces of lobotomized doodling to insult the eye. (Why not reprint one of the illustrations from the period, assuming there were some with Mitchell's stories.) Secondly, don't read the preface by SaM until you have read all of the stories. SaM goes into great detail with most of the stories and as a result endings, and the plots for that matter, are fully disclosed.

However, SaM's preface should be read. It details the publication of newspaper published SF in the 19th century, though it is a certainty that much more has yet to be done. It's a new field to explore, you Lit. majors! SaM makes a rather startling statement that Mitchell was "quite possibly a major influence on H. G. Wells, whom he anticipated." And he has some fairly strong proof to back it up.

The only question that comes to mind is, did Mitchell write fiction or hoaxes? As SaM says in the preface, "/THE SUN/ also fictionalized the news, literally wrote it like fiction with characters, dialog, plot, and sometimes in the first person." He also mentions that sometimes the fiction would be reprinted by other papers and published as actual news. About the only thing SaM says in defense of Mitchell writing fiction and not outright hoaxes is that "there were clues for the observant, but the naive were presented with headlines, decks, and city datelines in the traditional newspaper format." I admit that this is a rather minor point, but I think that it is important to define the type of genre Mitchell was writing in. Perhaps there is no one word to define his type of writing, it having been a long time since newspapers published fiction.

If this book interests you in "ephemeral" publishers of SF, you might get the George Locke books distributed by Don Grant. Locke has been republishing English newspaper and magazine SF originally published in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Crystal Man is highly recommended for those of you interested in the roots of SF. For normal fans (is there such a critter?) you would be wise to latch onto this book; it will surprise you.

The Crystal Skull, by Richard Garvin (Pocket Books; $1.25) [Reviewed by Trina King]

The front cover reads: "The Mitchell-Hedges Skull: Priceless Relic of the Lost Civilization of Atlantis - or Occult Messenger of Death?" By the time I finished reading the book, the question posed still had not been answered. In fact, they were hardly touched upon.

The book is about a perfectly formed skull carved from a single piece of quartz. It was discovered in 1926 in the ruins of Lubaantun, a Mayan city in British Honduras, by the "adopted" daughter of the noted explorer F. A. Mitchell-Hedges.

Since the skull was found under an alter, it was concluded that its function must have been religious. It is demonstrated by the author how the skull must have been used to produce awe and fear in worshippers. Suspended over a fire, the eye sockets would glow eerily because of the arrangement of convex and concave lenses built into the skull. The jaw was hinged to give the appearance of speaking. To the unsophisticated, this could be taken as the presence of a living god.

Garvin gives examples of occult happenings which he attributes to the skull. In one case he says that, in the presence of witnesses, the skull created an aura around itself of up to 18 inches. This he claims to have observed on more than one occasion. Other times, the eye sockets have revealed scenes of civilizations long destroyed. This encouraged Garvin to postulate that the skull could have been the original crystal ball.

Other crystal skulls have been found, one of which is on display in the British Museum, but none of them was as perfectly formed or of such an advanced design as the Mitchell-Hedges.

Physical data about these skulls are confined to measurements, since quartz cannot be subjected to radiocarbon dating. Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether the other skulls were bad copies of the Mitchell-Hedges skull or models for it.

The Mitchell-Hedges skull comprises some interesting and unusual features. For example, it contains an interior prism which can be used to magnify and view objects held beneath the skull. The convolutions of the crystal skull are exact duplicates of the convolutions found on the human skull. And, there is evidence that it was apparently carved without the aid of metal tools, a job that would take an estimated 300 man-years of effort! These features and others show that the creators of this artifact had to have a highly complex and technologically advanced civilization.

Several theories are postulated to explain the origin of this unique creation. Mitchell-Hedges believed that it was the product of Atlantis, since none of the civilizations yet discovered by man could have produced this object with the limited skills that they possessed. Erich Von Daniken's theory that there were celestial visitors to Earth is also discussed. Even the possibility that the skull could have been a fake planted by Mitchell-Hedges is examined. Oddly enough, however, the theory that it was the product of Mayan culture (since it was there it was discovered) is not mentioned. Unfortunately, Garvin is not content to let each theory rest on its own merits and demerits. He is compelled to demolish each one, thus leaving the reader in total confusion.

The end result is a book that is poorly written and poorly presented. The Mitchell-Hedges skull is a significant archaeological find, and deserves a better treatment than Richard Garvin can offer.

The Coming Dark Age, by Roberto Vacca (Doubleday; $6.95; 221 pp.; 1973)
[Reviewed by Michael T. Shoemaker]

In SOTWJ #134 Don published a review extract from a newspaper which called this a "dreadful book . . . with scant factual underpinnings." I must thoroughly disagree with this evaluation.

As one can gather from the title, the book is a warning of a world-doom that Vacca sees as inevitable, though not unavoidable. Vacca's unique theory of doom is a fascinating object for intellectual stimulation. According to Vacca, the collapse of our civilization will be touched off by the complete breakdown of our "large systems", and will probably occur between 1985 and 1994. By a "large system" Vacca means such things as systems of communication; systems for the regulation of road, rail and air traffic; systems for generating and transmitting electricity; etc. On page 34 Vacca says:

> Many of these systems were built up without any long-term planning on the part of their designers: they were gradually modified to meet growing demands as problems of increasing magnitude arose. Often such adaptations had no more than moderate success.

Present congestion, says Vacca, is such that most of our systems are in danger of breaking down. Indeed, he shows how a number of our systems function merely because probability favors their continued functioning. Nevertheless, the possibility for breakdown exists even now:

> ...the entire telephone system of the United States would be blocked if 25 million Americans should decide to use the phone simultaneously.
>
> Motorists' self-imposed restrictions on their use of their cars means an ever-increasing number of cars that could begin to circulate at any moment moment but that are actually kept at home for most of the time. As the dimensions of this potential volume of traffic grow, there is the not-to-be-discounted possibility that on some odd day too many cars will suddenly appear on the streets and a king-sized traffic jam will be the result... And then every mile of every traffic lane in the city will contain three hundred cars, the speed of which will be exactly zero. It will be impossible to disentangle the mix-up in squares and at intersections, and many drivers will abandon their useless vehicles, locking the doors to express their irritation. Such a traffic block will last many days; perhaps weeks... its secondary consequences would include the stoppage of much more than private cars. Neither fire engines, doctors, nor police would have free passage... the transport and distribution of food to the large masses of people involved would be virtually impossible. The exhaust fumes of hundreds of thousands of

immobilized cars would have ample distribution during the few hours in which there would still be hope of reaching home on wheels.

Hmm... sounds like an SF story that I once read: "Gasmask", by James D. Houston.

Another extremely important point in his theory is that our large systems are so interconnected that a breakdown in one system will start a chain reaction causing a breakdown in numerous other systems. His scenario, "Death of the City of New York", brilliantly demonstrates this.

Contrary to the previously mentioned review extract, Vacca's theory is so elaborate, detailed and factually sound that it is pointless for me to describe the book any further. This book is essential reading for lovers of non-fiction speculation.

FANZINES

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FANZINE FRICASSEE: FANZINE REVIEWS

by: Michael T. Shoemaker

In the past, I have tried to organize the reviews in each installment of this column around a central theme: newcomers, personalzines, Hugo choices, etc. I have always preferred the unity of such a column, rather than the usual haphazard collection of disrelated reviews of various fanzines. With this installment, however, I have succumbed to an accumulation of pressures: a three-foot high stach of fanzines, guilt feelings over the infrequency of this column, and a lack of time. In the past year there have been many fanzines that I had intended to review, but I never got to most of them and now they are just to old to review. So for a while, I am going to attempt a more frequent column in an attempt for greater timeliness, and to catch up on the recent backlog. The fanzines reviewed this time do not really have anything in common except that I have been neglecting them for too long:

Maybe: Worlds of Fandom #'s 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 40; Aug. 73 - Jun. 74. Bimonthly from Irvin Kock c/o 835 Chattanooga Bank Bldg., Chattanooga, TN 37420 for 50¢ or 6/$2.50 or trade. 20, 20, 20, 29, 20, 17, 16, 20 pp. resp.

Since the last time I reviewed Maybe (in TWJ #82), Irvin has continued his policy of presenting genzine-type material in odd-numbered issues, and fanzine reviews and news in even-numbered issues. The exception to this policy is #29, which is entirely devoted to a compilation of "Fanspeak--Jargon of Madness." Although this compilation offers nothing new for the experienced fan, it is rather comprehensive and should serve nicely as an aid to neos.

After having praised Irvin previously for improvements in both layout and content, it is now discouraging to view the downhill course the zine has taken in the last year. I cringe when I see his wasteful and unartistic use of artwork in the zine. In #30 he has three left-hand pages in a row on which two Bill Guy illos are haphazardly crammed between the lines of the text. In #34 he has three Guy illos, one atop another in column form, on a single page. In each of these 20 page issues he uses seven of Guy's magnificent illos. This is a practice that is inconsiderate both to the artist and to other faneds because of the drain it puts upon the artist's production.

The buyer's guide fanzine reviews of #'s 30, 34, and 36 are similar to those in Yandro, and are quite possibly the most extensive regular listing appearing in fandom. This is an invaluable sourcebook for a faned who is looking for new trades. Unfortunately, the crust of zines is so great in #40 Irvin does a virtual listing without comments. This is carrying an obsession for a complete listing to the point of absurdity. One would expect a sensible person to do a little editing, a judicious pruning of the least important items.

#31 is an average quality genzine with a well-researched article by Andrew Darlington on "The Evolution of Michael Moorcock" which almost makes me want to read more of Moorcock. Also very good is an article by Steve Beatty which answers some of the criticisms that have been leveled against Lord of the Rings. Some may regard the article as elementary, but it is elegantly written, and if you do not have the time to read the Miesel book on LotR then this is a nice substitute. #33 is less interesting to me, with an article on the occult and "The Case for Gnostic Elitism," a boring article concerning various ideologies, by Ray Nelson. #35 is composed entirely of letters about nothing in particular.

Rating - #29 - 4; #31 - 5;
the others - 2

Notes from the Chemistry Department #'s 1-6, from Denis Quane, Box CC, East Texas Station, Commerce, Texas 75428 for 30¢ or the usual. 10, 12, 14, 20, 22, 20 pages resp.

Notes is the brightest newcomer to the fanzine scene in the last year. Produced by neo-fan Denis Quane, it has never looked neoish in the slightest. From the first issue on it has had mostly impeccable mimeography and good artwork on a high quality stock of light blue paper. The editor knows exactly what kind of fanzine he wants to produce, and he is producing it. Denis has a strong bent for hard-science in his SF reading and is a strong supporter of Analog. These facets of his personality predominate the character of his fanzine, which I find refreshingly unique in the present fanzine field.

Every issue of Notes has had a department concerning Hugo nominations in the fiction categories. I think this has been the single most important aspect of Notes, and that the ongoing discussion of Hugo nominations which Denis has provoked has been an immensely valuable service to fandom. When you sit down and consider it, you find that few fanzines provide much in-depth discussion of the fiction Hugos, and that no fanzine has acted as a clearing-house for suggestions and comments for a period of time comparable to Notes.

Each issue of Notes has also had a department of short book reviews, much in the manner of Buck Coulson, by Denis Quane. Another feature of Notes has been a series of science oriented articles. "The Earth As Test Tube" in #1 explores the possibility that life was planted on Earth by aliens, and #2 features "The Scale of Space." "Nuclear Explosions in Space" in #5 explores possible explanations for the frequent bursts of intense gamma radiation that we have detected coming from outer space. One possibility suggested in that we are detecting E.E. Smith type space battles. Frank Balazs' "Pulsar People" in #6 is a clever idea-tripping article on the problems of communicating with aliens. He discusses exobiologist Frank Drake's 'pulsar people", with lives lasting seconds in the high gravity, high temperature, environment of pulsars; and concludes with:

> Imagine them trying to conceive of chemical beings operating on a super-cold planet like Earth, where nothing could move. In fact, in such an environment, atoms would be so far apart, that the pulsar people would consider it practically a vacuum. Imagine, life made out of a vacuum? Impossible!

Other fine articles in Notes have been "Some Thoughts on Hard to Be a God" by Patrick Mcguire (#5), an insightful look at the difficulties of translation; "Man and the Lord of Space and Time" by Sandra Miekel (#6), about how aliens would fit into current theological thought; and "Science Fiction--Trivial Literature?" by Denis Quane (#1), which is a brilliant refutation of Lem's fuggheaded article in SFC #35-37.

Average Rating - 6

Dynatron #'s 55-59, Oct. 73-Jun. 74, from Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107 for 25¢ or the usual. 20, 8, 22, 8, 16 pages resp.

I have been meaning to review Dynatron ever since #49, but it never seemed to fit into any installment of my column. This is because Dynatron defies classification. Is it a personalzine, a discussionzine, or a genzine? It is all three, because it keeps oscillating from category to category. Yet, from issue to issue, the iconoclastic, somewhat cynical, personality of Roy Tackett predominates.

Dynatron, now in its 14th year, is one of the oldest fanzines currently being published in fandom. Its format is conducive to longevity: no special layout, no illos (although there is an occasional cover), just words. The outspoken opinions of HORT (Horrible Old Roy Tackett) are guaranteed to entertain and spark discussion. Roy's regular commentary on news items and such, gives Dynatron a character that reminds me very much of Title. The diversity of material makes it impossible for me to comment on these issues specifically. They are all a potpourri of news commentary, book commentary, letters, fanzine commentary, con or SF club reports, and occasional articles. #55 has a fine ATom cover and #57 has a do-it-yourself cover which Roy explains like this:

> Just take your pen, pencils, brushes, etc., and draw your very own cover on this issue of Dynatron. It will be an original and exclusive creation which, in future years, you will be able to sell to completist collectors for some utterly ridiculous price.

#56 has a very minor article by Mike Kring about nut cults. #57 is a genzine with an excellent article by Arthur Rapp which refutes thi biorhythm cult; a Gilliland piece that I could not figure out; a piece of fan fiction by Darrell Schweitzer which is very good in some of its particular details and enjoyable if one disregards its basically assinine, hackneyed idea and plot; and an article by Pauline Palmer on the energy crisis.

Average Rating - 7

Godless #'s 5-7, Nov. 73, Feb. 74, May 74; 20, 26, 30 pages resp.; irregular from Bruce D. Arthurs, 57th Trans. Co., Fort Lee, Va. 23801 for 50¢ or the usual.

Bruce complains that fans seem to prefer his personalzine, Powermad, to his genzine, Godless, and he does not understand why. I think the reason is that fans would rather see Bruce's entertaining and provocative writing rather than the merely average quality articles that appear in Godless.

The problem with these issues of Godless is that they seem to be not well-rounded, too thin and incomplete. The reason for this is that the articles have not been of a "major" nature and have not provided a broad enough base for discussion by the readers. Despite this, the lettercolumn remains the most interesting part of the zine, mainly because Bruce has a good collection of hardworking letterhacks.

Take #5 for instance: it has an editorial about nothing in particular, an "article" taken from the letters of Lord Jim Kennedy about his search for Arizona fandom, two good book reviews, and a lettercol. Friends, one article and two book reviews do not make a complete fanzine to my way of thinking.

Without appearing immodest (since I have an article in #6), I would like to say that #6 is an immense improvement. Donn Brazier writes a bit of SF nostalgia about memorable stories and the reasons they are memorable. For fans such as myself, whose hearts are back in the Golden Age, an article like this is a wonderfully evokative comment hook; very healthy for the zine's lettercol. Another very good item for a healthy lettercol is the provocative reply from Roger Elwood regarding Bruce's review in #5 of Ten Tomorrows. Sheryl Birkhead has an "Informal Appreciation" of Bradley's Darkover series, which is a little too informal for my tastes, and Doug Leingang has an indescribable piece of weird writing. My own article, surveying SF's critical literature, met with little agreement in the lettercol of #7, with the exception of Paul Walker.

Once again, with #7, Godless lacks an adequate number of substantial articles to give one the satisfying feeling of having read a complete fanzine. The major item of the issue is a well-written article on pets by one of fandom's best humorists, Dave Locke. Unfortunately, my bias against Disneyish accounts of Oh-isn't-that-cute mischevious animals prevents me from praising this piece any further. The rest of the issue is taken up by a pointless article by D. Gary Grady, "Fighting Words on Astronomy," which is like beating a dead horse; a compendium of story titles taken from locs in reply to Brazier's article in #6; and reviews and locs.

Rating - #5 - 3
#6 - 6
#7 - 5

Cypher #'s 9, 10, .11. Mar. 73, Oct. 73, May 74. #'s 9 & 10 are 58 and 55 pages legal-length, and #11 is 46 pages of reduced offset digest size. 60¢ or 5/$3 or the usual. US agent is Cy Chauvin, 17829 Peters, Roseville, Michigan 48066. Editor & Publisher is James Goddard, Plovers Barrow, School Road, Nomansland, Salisbury, Wilts, U.K.

In the absence of Speculation, Cypher is England's top fanzine. It has everything one would expect from a serious-to-the-core sercon zine. The book reviews and lettercolumn are outstanding, and the zine can be depended upon for at least one exceptionally fine article per issue.

Although it is over a year old, #9 is well worth your attention (I'm sure back issues are available), because it has two particularly fine items. There is a long interview of Harry Harrison conducted by James Goddard, Brian Aldiss, and Leon Stover. Because this is more of an informal round-robin talk with Harrison, rather than an interview with carefully planned questions, it does not quite come up to the level of the Walker interviews, but there is nevertheless much commentary on SF to be found herein. The other major item of the issue is an article by Jeff Clarke dealing with three of James Tiptree's stories and showing the development of Tiptree's writing over a three-year span. A perceptive article that shows why Clarke is one of the best sercon writers in fandom. #9 also has a humorous article by Brian Aldiss which is very faaanish.

The two major items of #10 are an interview of James Blish by Brian Aldiss and an essay by Cy Chauvin, "SF: The Unrealized Dream," which also appeared in Prehensile. The interview deals primarily with Blish's fiction and gives the reader a good "story behind the story." Best of all, Blish destroys Aldiss's idiotic, pigeon-holing notion, propounded in Billion Year Spree and elsewhere, of "the Campbellian-norm" of "power fantasy." Chauvin's long essay, as I have stated before, is a landmark piece of theoretical criticism not to be missed by any serious fan. In my opinion it is the finest single piece of fanwriting in 1973.

Chauvin has a follow-up essay, "SF: Realizing the Dream," in #11. This sequel, however, is a perfect example of a critic so enamoured by his pet theory that his perception is distorted and he dogmatically insists on the one best kind of SF. Specifically, Chauvin says that SF which introduces only one SF-nal concept into an otherwise mainstream fabric (such as The Invisible Man or Dying Inside) is inferior SF, all other factors being equal. I disagree strongly with this for two reasons. (It is assumed in the foregoing that the story is SF; that is, that the plot and theme are inexorably linked to the SF-nal concept, and that the story could not have been written as anything but SF.) First, stories with only one SF-nal concept are the best vehicle for a fully developed, realistic exploration of such ideas as 'what would it really be like to be invidible? or telepathic?" If

other SF elements are thrown into the pot, it is no longer possible to answer these questions, and I see no objective grounds for arguing that the answers to these questions are of any less worth than what may be discussed in more extravagant stories. A telepathic viewpoint sure as hell can give one a new perceptive. Second, the realistic setting of these stories increases the verisimilitude and makes the story more relevant. For too long sensationalism has held sway in SF; where a plethora of gimmicks overshadow other qualities. Chauvin's credo would have us praise most those authors who pack the most nonsense into their stories.

Filling out most of the rest of #11 are three reviews of Billion Year Spree by J. G. Ballard, Bob Shaw, and Philip Harbottle. None of them are very illuminating.

The covers of Cypher are top notch. Especially impressive are the impeccably reproduced scratchboard covers by Kevin Cullen on #9 and #11. In fact, the wrap-around cover on #11 is one of the best half dozen fanzine covers I've ever seen. The interiors by Cullen (especially those in #9) are of professional quality.

Rating - #9 - 8
#10 - 8
#11 - 6

Lettercolumn

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK: Lettercolumn

MIKE GLICKSOHN -- 24 Aug. '74
(141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3)

I don't have the time to write you a proper loc on WSFA J#83 but I do want to let you know that I've read most of it and enjoyed a great deal of what I read. Quite unusually for me, I found the review section by far the best part of the issue. I personally could do without the fection and the bibliographies, but I know they are popular with many of your readers. Delap's excellent reviews of film books were one of the highlights of the issue and I much appreciated the tripartite look at the Aldiss volume. Don's look at Tiptree was fascinatingly enjoyable, But I'd rate it a critical failure. Don just doesn't give enough analysis in with his plot summaries. What particularly appealed to me was learning that Tiptree had written many of those stories. I've an abysmal memory for connecting authors with stories but back in 69-70-71 I was still reading a fair amount of sf and had read almost all of Tiptree's early stories without really being aware of it. The way in which Don pointed out the very noticeable change in overall tone of Tip's work, from the comic to the almost completely pessimistic, was therefore a revelation to me. A damn good article, at least for someone with as poor a memory as I have. I disagree with many of Mike Shoemaker's opinions but he is easily one of the best fanzine reviewers around.

MARTIN WILLIAMS --24 May '74
3528 Meridian N., Seattle, WA 98103

...This is getting to be too much -- TWJ #83 must have been about 130 pages at least! Trouble is: size doesn't necessarily give quality and that seems to be the case with this issue. Too much of too little. The best part of the issue is the LoC section, it's very good. Should be interesting to see how Harlan reacts to the criticism that was rightfully dumped on him. He'll probably make an ass of himself again.

I did appreciate the ELECTRIC BIBLIOGRAPH of Keith Laumer, but I wish you would curb your passion for indexes and lists! I could be wrong, but I don't think very many people are interested in indexes for TWJ #72 and back, hope you don't have to go all the way back to #1!

This LoC isn't all complaints tho, it's just that I seem to like SOTWJ better, because of the frequency, short book reviews, En Passant when it appears, etc. Most of the book reviews in TWJ are anthologies which (as I've told you before) I don't buy or read. TWJ is far from the only one, on this policy tho.

((You'll see Harlan's reaction...stay tuned -- ed.))

ROBERT SMOOT -- 15 Aug. '74
Seven Churches, West Virginia

((Re: WSFA #83.)) This is quite an omnibus. I knew you had complained of WSFA reaching gargantuan proportions, but this was ridiculous. Excellent, but ridiculous.

Tch, cannot say much for the art, as is noted by someone somewhere herein. While not bad by itself, the art was not especially grand, nor did it always work with the attending text.

It's been some time since I've read this, so I'll have to refresh mine gray matter as I peck.

Three hoots and one holler for the use of Latin. I like that language (two years of it at school) and like to see it used.

Wish I could get the Poe tales noted by Barry Gillam in his article. I hope this is a regular feature, someone somewhere somehow noting and discussing a literary trend or feature in the fantasy or sf side of domestic literature.

For brevity, I'll say I liked overall rather well the poetry herein. The limericks were cute ("Whassis?!? declares a befuddled ed. "He says 'cute'! What meanest he by that? Where, by gadflies, are declaratives and exactidudes?").

Darrell Schweitzer has a good article. "Good" in that I liked it, as it was indeed funny. Also, I agree with the pokes taken frequently. Alas and alack, entertainization and commercialization of even educational programs is almost necessary to draw wide public viewing. Commercial TV is nine-tenths entertainment-for-entertainment's-sake, appealing to the lowest common I.Q. denominator amongst the 211 million American viewers. Specials and extended historic events as Apollo flights must have entertainment to keep viewers, or at least viewers of large proportions. I may be needlessly harsh, but it is a letdown to learn that the viewing public gives a second place to informative, consequential programs.

Almost wish I had caught first-hand Harlan Ellison's comments. Alas, they seem to have sparked quite a chain of reaction.

I liked the book reviews. ("Be explicit! There's that 'like' again!") One needs to be informed of available literature. Books are probably the most influential items since the wheel (???) was found/intented.

Brother Rich got Denis Gifford's A Pictorial History of Horror Movies for $4.95, sold at that price apparently because the store could get no takers at the $9.95 price tag. It is indeed a grand book, stuffed with rare pics and attractive stills.

I am pleased to see a review of Gold of the Gods. Nice to see what his latest expoundings concern, I find his arguments poor, as he offers little supporting meat. He says, "Such and such is believed ... and I offer you this colorful and humbling alternative... Which ya want, huh?" And oft times he fails to describe the supposed and accepted theory. How can one accept anything so "supported"?

But, no doubt, I'll get a paperback edition of GotG, if only to see what more he says that, while exciting on the speculative side, is sickening on the theoretical side.

I was at first amazed at the mass of bibliographies WSFA has. Very useful these.

And, of course, Michael T. Shoemaker is not to go without mention. He is a noteworthy zine reviewer ("So what else is new?"). I like reading him. ("That word again!")...

AVEDON CAROL --15 Sept. '74

While I have not seen any of the reviews of Again Dangerous Visions, or the resultant letters from Harlan Ellison or anyone else, I did read the book, and, as a radical feminist, feel qualified, even obliged, to make a response to some of the comments expressed in the lettercolumn of TWJ #83.

First off, to Denis Quane's assertion that Kate Wilhelm an "authoress" is no more sexist than calling Blacks 'coloured people"; I submit that it is indeed racist to continue to refer to blacks in a manner which they object to. To ignore their objections is to dismiss their feelings as being inconsequential. And to be regarded as an 'authoress", rather than author has proved so painful to women writers that they have often used masculine pseudonyms in order to have their works judged on their own worth, rather than as the efforts of mere "ladies."

A more complicated point is raised by the subject of Joanna Russ's story, "When It Changed."

In the context of past and current fiction, "W.I.C." is an almost revolutionary piece. Here we see a departure from the disgusting heterosexism that most writers present us with ("This Terran custom of 'kissing' is very interesting, Captain. Show me again."). I only hope that other writers will take to heart the points that Russ has tried to make here.

But "W.I.C." is hardly without flaws. In the full political analysis, it fails miserably. (I would like to interrupt myself long enough to explain that, in Feminist Lingo, the word "politics" is inclusive of any aspect of the behavorial sciences.) I would be glad to give a more detailed account to anyone who is interested, but for now here is a brief list of the failings I found with the story:

Whileaway's society bears too close a resemblance to our own, which is BASED on the Sex Dualism. It seems unlikely that:

1. the nuclear family would still exist in any form.
2. Children would remain in the care and custody of their biological parents.
3. What we (inaccurately) refer to as "pair bonding" would still be in such strict practice.
4. Even without the restrictions placed on us by the sex dualism, we would not have progressed mentally, at least to some degree.

But even these do not negate my initial response to "When It Changed," which was: It's about time someone said that!

HARLAN ELLISON -- 24 July '74
3484 Coy Drive, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

No, I don't think I'll bother. But I'm genuinely amused at all the high-tension animosity flowing from your readers at my response to the Bischoff-Shoemaker review. Apparently I'm not the only certifiably insane bigmouthed bad taste no-talent overreactor around. Strange how flapped they all get just because someone dares to challenge the sanctity of the Fanzine Authority. I do wish, however, that one of these Socratic whizzes would explain why it's all right for fan after fan to snipe and rail and shoot off the mouth about writers, their work, the state of the universe, whatever...but it's somehow teddibly declasse for a writer to snap at fans. Since when is it a one-way street?

And while the explanations are rolling in from these backwash Wittgensteins and Schillers, ask them to elucidate the theories of charge-and-response that say a mild gentlemanly tone is the saner of the two: gut-level anger at stupidity, a release of honest hostility...or hypocritical posturing that maintains a facade of kindliness while the acid burns the real flesh. It seems to me your "readers" choose to slay the messenger because they don't like the message. Running changes on how big or diseased is my ego doesn't really answer the charge. And as for classy rejoinders, I think your Mr. Goldfrank's statement that I wallow in a latrine takes the prize. As I said at the outset, I don't think I'll bother going around again with your "readers." You'll notice I put quotes around the word. I don't consider these people "readers." They're fans. World of difference, and I've come to know what to expect from fans. Basically a seedy lot. One of them even admist to not having read the review, but feels I'm wholly off-base in my objections. Now that is what I consider solid criticism. It's interesting to note, however, that virtually every letter you printed shows a level of rancour and animosity usually reserved for defilers of children and concentration camp commanders who make lampshades from exotic materials. Only a professional, Brian Aldiss, felt I spoke from the heart and with cause. Must mean we both need psychiatric attention, right, Mr. Goldfrank?

Silly. I think that's what your readers are, Mr. Miller. Garden variety silly. I suppose it's nice to have things like fanzines around, though. Keeps the more desparate of them off the city streets. And I do hope the dudu who thinks he writes better than Andrew Wiener sells his magnum opus to Ted White. What with my brain rotting so fast, we'll need a new Great White Hope to take over.

And why is it I doubt Isaac called me a bigmouth? Must be more of that paranoia of mine.

As said elsewhere, I've been flying off the handle too much lately at the foamings of fans (it's been a hard year, and nickel and dime bullshit gets me too cranky, too easily), so I'll not be writing to fanzines again. Which makes it easy for you: no need to send me any more WSFA Journals, Sons of, billet-doux, or letters of reference to primal therapists. Our business with one another is at an end.

Save to point out that as shitty a book as A, DV is (an inescapable truth buttressed by the learned comments of your correspondents), Richard Delap, on page T-1 of the same issue of WSFA Journal wherein my adolescent rages are taken to task, says of it: "Undoubtedly the best collection of original material in years ... The book is an expensive one but worth every penny of its price, and any sf fan who doesn't own it has a gap in his collection that nothing else can fill."

Ain't that peculiar. Hey, Goldfrank, does Richard need a shrink, too?

((If Richard does need psychiatric care, we'll soon find out. A review of A, DV appears within this ish.

Criticism is not a one-way street. Letters presented herein are continually the total input received. No attempt to eliminate conflicting opinions on any subject is made. Could it be that all parties show a lack of forethought in allowing the existence of one another's right to disagree? Probably. -- ed.))

DARRELL SCHWEITZER -- 12 July '74
113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, PA 19087

A belated thanks for WSFA Journal 83. The thing is one of the bigger fanzines I've seen lately, but it gives a strong impression of wasted space. Hundred page fanzines are awfully hard to put out, so you should be trying to cut like crazy. Devoting twelve pages to indexing, cross indexing, counter indexing, counter-counter indexing, etc., the magazine was just a bit too much. It was a waste of paper, effort, and postage. The same goes for the long lists of Richard Delap's favorite stories for the last few years. We all have our own favorites, but who really cares? Is it worth devoting that much room to? If you cut down the size of the magazine, eliminating also some of the more superficial reviews (such a mammoth review column is only justifiable if the reviews are superlative -- not all of them are), you would be able to publish it more frequently, and it wouldn't cost as much. Or, if you must have fanzines this big, wait until you can get the material to fill it. A good example of a very big fanzine was Jeff Smith's PHANTASMICOM 12, which doesn't contain a single thing that could be dispensed with without some loss. In other words he's been editing. I suggest you do the same. WSFA JOURNAL has the makings of a very good fanzine. It just needs some of the flab trimmed off.

The lettercolumn is quite interesting, but it leaves me with the impression that I have wandered onto a battlefield not knowing which army is the good guys. I have not seen the Shoemaker review or Ellison's alleged epistolary atrocity, so I can't take sides. However, I must agree that it is not kosher for a professional author, especially a well-established one, to protest an unfavorable review. Harlan should be secure enough to realise that one bad review isn't going to ruin him, and he should be experienced enough to know that fans are few in number, and nothing they say, or write for other fans in fanzines, has the slightest relevance whatsoever to the real world of publishing. Fans at best make up 5% of the readership, and their tastes are not necessarily those of the general public. The opinion of fans simply does not matter beyond the level of very limited specialty publishing. When you're dealing with Doubleday, the SF Book Club, and other mass circulation outfits the fans do not influence things one bit. The ability of a book to sell to people outside of fandom is what is important.

However, Harlan gets excited at times. He stated in his VERTEX interview that he considers fandom "the worst thing about the SF field" or something to that effect. Basically he claimed that juvenile antics of fans are ruining SF's image. This is nonsense, since the vast majority of SF readers (the people who buy the books) are unaware of the existence of fandom. Now that SF has moved out of the closet, and is widely circulated, fandom is like a barnacle on the bottom of an ocean liner. It doesn't change the course very much.

Harlan sometimes forgets that all opinions are to be respected, regardless of how asinine (one thinks) they are. If it is genuinely stupid, an opinion should be ignored, both in the interests of social grace and the fact that combatting such a thing is demeaning. (Like arguing with the Flat Earth society.) Especially for a big name professional writer the thing to do is ignore adverse reviews. Harlan can take care of himself; he doesn't need to worry about the little guys.

Personally I think A, DV was far superior to the original volume. My reaction to the first DV was somewhat like that of what few non-fannish SF readers I have run into, and quite unlike the reactions of most fans. I bought the book for the names, and was sorely disappointed. I'll confess that I was 15 when the thing came out, but I was nearly 20 (and writing reviews professionally) by the time I finished the damn thing. I went back and reread parts of it, assuming that I had failed to understand some of the more "difficult" stories. Yet my opinions didn't change. With experience and age I only realised why I was not impressed. I read a trick ending story that Poul Anderson should have known better than to write, a five minute finger exercise by Lester del Rey that was about as "shocking" as a READER'S DIGEST article, a bit of flugg by Brian Aldiss that reads like fanzine fiction, a sophmoric Joyce pastiche by Philip Jose' Farmer (why are imitations of 50 year old mainstream techniques considered "experimental"? Is SF really that backward?), a bare skeleton of a potentially interesting story by Keith Laumer, a minor horror story by Robert Bloch, who did better in WEIRD TALES 20 years before, a brief joke by Damon Knight which was probably never published before because it was too minor, and so on. In other words, inferior work by the best authors in the field. I would say that only David Bunch and J.G. Ballard were even approaching those authors' best work. Even Ellison's was minor. I have vastly admired some of his stories, but "Prowler" isn't one of them.

Yet I am glad the book came out. Even if its literary level was so low, its political impact within the field was great. Much dust needed stirring and Harlan did an admirable job. We are presently living in a golden age of science fiction, which would not have been possible without things like DV. All this haranguing about "literary sophistication" and "mature sf" made it possible for such things to appear in the field, even if they weren't present in DV itself. I think future critics will determine that to be the major importance of the "New Wave". The material itself was of no importance, but the impact it had was enormous, and beneficial.

A, DV I think is a far, far better book. There are places where Harlan yielded to the temptation to buy minor stuff, cramming it into an already enormous book, but overall it's a very solid anthology. I reviewed it favorably in a local newspaper, calling it "the most important anthology of the past few years", which is something I would never have said about DV. Still A, DV, like WSFA JOURNAL, had a little flab around the edges which should have been trimmed away. I was surprised at the overall high level of the material, however, since the original volume had not led me to expect anything of the kind. Kate Wilhelm's "The Funeral" is very fine, as were Disch, Carr, Tiptree, Benford,

Vonnegut, Wolfe (Both Gene and Bernard), and Hoffman stories. Nothing was unreadable except for the Lupoff, which was really a third season Star Trek episode done up to look "experimental". I read ten chapters of it before the basic shallowness of the whole thing caused me to give up. I really think, though, that with DV Harlan couldn't pull another publicity stunt, he didn't have an unbeatable lineup of contributors, and there was no other way to sell the book but to deliver quality material. For the most part he did. I wonder what Harlan could do with a monthly science fiction magazine (Besides go crazy)? The results might be very interesting.

((Some of the changes mentioned are in the works; some are completed herein. We hope to attract more comment. Anyone? -- ed))

STEPHEN GREGG -- 22 May '74
P. O. Box 193, Sandy Springs, SC 29677

I really don't think there is an Answer to the question of what constitutes a Professional Magazine. There isn't a single criterion which can be used as a guide in each and every case. Payment for material would seem to be the closest thing to a universal guide available, and I think it is usually reliable, but there are amateur publications which have, on occasion, paid for material; and there are professional publications (I could cite any number of literary magazines as examples here) which virtually never pay for material. (And, of course, how much payment constitutes "Payment?" Would 1/15¢ a word, 50¢ a poem, etc. count?) I think every magazine will have to be judged individually.

In regards to ETERNITY, I think the fact that payment (which is at least 1¢/word for fiction and 10¢/line for poetry) is made for material, circulation is via newstands (tho not via a national distributor), and that the editorial intent is a viable, self-supporting (No, I really don't think I'll ever make money on ETERNITY) magazine, and not a vehicle for egoboo (I could come out much better in that area with a mimeod fanzine I'm certain)-- all these together make ETERNITY a professional magazine.

But you see, there are ten dudes waving their hands right now, just waiting to say that ETERNITY can't be a prozine 'cause it only comes out once every Ice Age or so, and there's nothing I can do except say "Fine. Go read ANALOG, VERTEX, IF and GALAXY. It's your time you're wasting, not mine (and, yes, I meant to leave out those three other zines). I recall only one story from either of those four magazines that I've read in the past, say, year, that I've enjoyed at all (not counting serials; if a magazine depends on serials for its readership when all a person has to do is wait four months for bound copy of the book, then that magazine is dead; it just doesn's know it yet). The story I'm referring to is Michael Bishop's "Death and Designation Among the Asaidi" which deserves the Hugo (and deserved the Nebula) and any other award anyone cares to bestow upon it. Fabulous!

With that said, however, I must say that I'm intrigued by the statements of editorial policy that James Baen (new editor of GALAXY/IF) printed in an ad in the latest LOCUS. I will be watching those two magazines more closely for a while. If the quality of the fiction published there improves I will be among the first to publicly congratulate all concerned.

And I imagine I should clear up one mis-statement you made in the letter column. Scott Edelstein and I are not co-editors of ETERNITY. Blame for anything and everything that eventually appears in ETERNITY rests on myself. Scott advises, does reading, makes suggestions, finds material, and many other jobs for

which he gets no pay and very little thanks. But if someone doesn't like something about ETERNITY, it's my fault, not Scott's.

((Sorry for the misunderstanding; corrected as of now. -- ed.))

RICHARD DELAP -- 14 May '74

Have just received WSFA Journal #83, and am flabbergasted by the amount of material by myself in its pages...not to mention my astonishment at the very kind comments by various people in the lettercol.

Of course, I do have a couple of complaints (well, Delap is not known as an everything's-roses person): perhaps most disturbing is the 'best' anthologies stories listing -- in the top ten stories you have listed only nine of my choices. The story omitted is Kate Wilhelm's "The Funeral," from (what else?) Again, Dangerous Visions. Hope you will make note of this in a future issue and (if a copy went to Wilhelm or Knight) let the author know the mistake was entirely accidental. The second error is the omission of a word from an Aldiss quote in the Billion Year Spree review -- specifically, p. N-6, line 14: "various themes of a science fiction nature were ... to be drawn together exuberantly in Well's work." 'Were' was left out, making it sound as if Aldiss' sentence was incomplete or my quote of it was confusing abridged.

I might also note that in that magazine 'best' list, I have since discovered that Malzberg used not one pseudonym but two, the second being "Robin Schaefer." There may of course be more -- I'm fairly sure "Verge Foray" is a pseudonym, but I can't remember to whom it belongs. Jack Wodhams? Ted Hallus also is another suspect one.

((If anyone knows any more pseudonyms and their owners, we'd be interested. Also, with this mention of our omissions, we stand dutifully corrected. -- ed.))

DON D'AMMASSA -- 11 May '74
19 Angell Dr., E. Prov., RI 02914

((Re. TWJ #83)) Mark Owings has some minor errors in the Laumer Bibliography. "The Desert and the Stars" is the alternate title of "Protest Note", not "Sealed Orders", as listed. "Sealed Orders" is the alternate title of "Retief of the Red Tape Mountain". Individual listings of "Grime and Punishment" and "Test to Destruction" were left out. Also, "Garbage Invasion" (F&SF, December 1972) was not included, but I don't know when the bibliography was compiled. Very useful.

Alexis Gilliland's article suffers because of an unsupported statement he makes on which most of the article is based, specifically, "the history of any movement of this sort shows that radicals displace moderates". If this were true, then among the more radical groups today would be the NAACP and the Sons of Italy, demonstrably not the case. He also indicates that matriarchy invariably leads to a decline in birthrate. Again, not so. Black American society is much more matriarchal than white American society, but the Black birthrate is much higher.

Warren Johnson has got to be kidding. Does he really think Robert Heinlein gives a damn what Warren Johnson thinks of TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE? Authors often conceal their addresses to preserve their privacy from egotistical fans who, if they had their way, would monopolize the writer's time and induce permanent writers' block.

Richard Delap missed one 1972 Original Anthology that he didn't list. STRANGE HAPPENINGS edited by Robert Vitarelli, American Educational Publications paperback. But he sure didn't miss much.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:
BARRY GILLAM
LEIGH EDMONDS
MANLY WADE WELLMAN

ETCETERA: And All That Fits ....

Dear Reader:

You may very well ask "What the hell is a bread recipe doing in THE WSFA JOURNAL?" Let me compliment you. As a fan, you are an individualist, have wide interests, and are gifted with creativity.

It should be a challenge to all of those good attributes to try bread baking. If you are a man and all thumbs in the kitchen, take heart!! and don't let that be a cop-out. I had never baked before 3-1/2 months ago as of this writing. And I don't consider baking a sex-related role.

Through the process of trial, and MANY errors, I learned the art. The recipe which follows is like a debugged program: if you follow the instructions, you will avoid all the things that I did wrong. This program has been field-tested. A lady who had never baked before claimed her bread came out perfect the first time. The entire process takes about 3-1/2 hours, during which you are working and cleaning up for about 1-1/2 hours. During the rest of the time, with some overlap, the bread is doing its thing.

But why bake bread at all? It's fun and creative. You get a great feeling of accomplishment when those golden loaves come out of the oven. The kneading process will increase the strength in your hands. A friend told me "You never had a grip like that before." But the proof of the pudding.... Your bread will be more delicious than you can buy in any store. It is a pleasure to eat. My wife and kids love it. My girls don't say that their daddy is a computer programmer. No distinction there, but "My daddy bakes bread."

Here's hoping that I've hooked you, and turned you on,

JIM GOLDFRANK

BREAD BAKING FOR THOSE WHO KNOW FROM NOTHING: or, EVERY PERSON HIS (HER) OWN BAKER

To the beginning baker:

I am going to assume that you know no more than I did when I started baking three months ago. I will include a good deal of the technique that I learned the hard way, plus a basic recipe for bread. Once you master the technique, you will be able to bake different recipes from any cookbook, altering their approach slightly from what you have learned.

I. Equipment needed.

Set of measuring spoons, lots of bowls including some big ones, measuring cups, a large bread board, two 9" by 5" baking pans, a wooden stirring spoon, electric beater, kitchen spatula, rolling pin, drying rack.

II. Discussion of ingredients.

The recipe as given to me stated a certain amount of all-purpose flour. I prefer unbleached flour, which adds flavor to the bread. I have also used this recipe varying the proportions from the two cups of white flour you start out with, plus the remainder whole wheat, to all white. Any proportion is good. The more whole wheat you use, the denser the resulting bread will be. Active dry yeast can be used. I have gotten much better results with cake yeast. This latter should be refrigerated until use.

III. Basic recipe.

5-1/2 to 6-1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup milk, 1-1/2 cups water
5 tablespoons butter or margarine
3 tablespoons granulated white sugar
1 package active dry yeast (or cake yeast)
1 egg.

IV. Considerations.

As far as the flour is concerned, you always start with two cups of white flour. Then you add more white or whole wheat according to taste up to a certain point, which will later be described. Just how much this takes altogether, I don't really know. I have never used butter in baking bread. Many margarines have tablespoon measurements on the wrapper so that you can just cut off the amount needed. However, many recipes are listed in cups or fractions, so here is a handy conversion table.

Cups	Tablespoons
1/4	4
1/3	5-1/3
1/2	8
2/3	10-2/3
3/4	12
1	16

Note on the margarine: by the time you have finished buttering bowls and pans, you will have used one bar altogether.

V. Technique.

1. Place the yeast and sugar in a small bowl. Run the water from the tap until it is about skin temperature. Mix these thoroughly. Let sit for 10-15 minutes. This gets the yeast good and active.
2. In the largest mixing bowl you have, place two cups white flour, the salt and the egg.
3. Warm the milk and margarine over a low flame, with some stirring to break up the margarine. Don't let it get too hot or boil, or the saucepan will be difficult to clean.
4. Add both the yeast-sugar solution, and the milk-margarine to the flour. Beat this with the electric beater for about two minutes, using the spatula to scrape the dry flour from the sides of the bowl. When this is complete, rinse the beater blades immediately.
5. Around now, put your oven on low for just a few minutes. We need about 80° heat for the bread's first rise. The metal inside should not be too hot to touch. If you get it too warm, turn off the heat, and let it cool with the door open. If it does not get too hot, turn off the oven and leave the door closed. This step can be done in parallel with the preparation of the flour for the first rise.
6. Add the next cup of flour to the mixture in the mixing bowl. Stir thoroughly until all the new flour is in solution. Use the wooden spoon for this mixing. Keep adding flour and mixing until the mixture is not too gooky, and does not stick very much to your fingers. Toward the end of this, add less flour, so you will not get too much. Also, after a certain point, it may be easier to work the flour with your hands instead of the spoon.
7. Lightly flour the breadboard. Dump the contents of the mixing bowl onto the board. This brings us to kneading, which is important because it gives a uniform mixture to the dough, and the flour to be added, and breaks up small lumps in the flour. To knead, you push the dough under and toward the center, folding the dough in from the sides and top. As you knead, sticky parts of the dough will become exposed. Add more dry flour, and knead into the dough. When the dough is hardly sticky at all, you are ready for the next step.
8. Form the dough into a ball. Butter a large bowl. This is most easily done by taking some margarine in its wrapper, and completely covering the inside of the bowl with butter. Place the ball of dough into the bowl, and turn it over once. Place the bowl into the over, and let it sit for an hour. During this time, it will have doubled in size. Clean up everything you have used so far except the breadboard.

9. Lightly flour the breadboard. Put the risen dough onto the breadboard, in the center. Take the large mixing bowl and place it over the dough, which you can let sit for 15 minutes.
10. During this 15 minutes, butter the two baking pans thickly, using the same method used for the bowl above. Also warm the oven, as before for the second rise.
11. Cut the bread in half. Place one-half to one side, and place the remaining half on the breadboard the long way. Very lightly flour the top, and roll out with the rolling pin. Place the first baking pan beside the board so you can see how long and wide to make the dough. Fold the ends and sides in until the dough will fit the pan. If the folded parts don't stay down, use the rolling pin a little more. Turn the dough over so that the folds are on the bottom, and place this in the first pan. Repeat this step for the second half.
12. Place the two pans into the oven for the second rise. This should take another hour. This process should stop when the dough begins to go sideways over the sides of the pan. If it goes too far, the dough may be pushed back.
13. Remove the pans from the oven and preheat the over to 400°. At the same time, melt two tablespoons of butter in a small pan, and brush it onto the top of the dough.
14. Bake the bread for 25-30 minutes. Toward the end of this time, tap the bread with a fingernail. When you get a hollow sound, the bread is done. Drop the bread onto the cooling rack and turn right side up. Never attempt to wrap the bread before it is cool, or the crust will turn mushy because all the moisture will not have escaped.
15. Keep closed in a large plastic bag. Your bread has no preservatives in it, and so should only be sliced as you use it, and should be wrapped tight at any other time.
16. Bon appetit!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

A SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE DISCON II COMMITTEE

Below is a list of names (probably incomplete) of all those people who contributed so much of their free time during Discon II. Without their help, along with that of many others, there could have been no convention at all.

David (Reverend Dave) Carlton	Shirley Avery
Judy Newton	Tom Joll
Stu Tate	Jim Thomas
Pat Potts	Dick Roepke
Chris Callahan	Scratch Bacharach
Mike Lalor	Jim Landau
Ron Woltz	Richard Dale
Karen Townley	Avedon Carol
Lise Eisenberg	Chris Mays
Terry McCutcheon	and there are probably still more!!!!

FLUX DE MOTS: Editors' Pages

As Bill Hixon is away while this is being typed, and Dave Weems said what he wanted to say at the beginning of Bookworld, the only editor to speak to you in this section in this issue will be the Editor-in-Chief, Don Miller. And he has so much to say that this section may never end....

First, we would like to repeat some of the credits for this issue, and give additional credit where it was overlooked in the "Credits" section. We would particularly like to thank Bill Hixon, Dave Weems, Wayne Piatt, and Chick Derry, without whose efforts this issue might not have made it. Bill, Dave, and Wayne did all of the offset typing and most of the editing; Bill and Dave did all of the offset publishing, with the assistance of Chick Derry. Our only involvement in this issue was in gathering much of the material, serving in a consultant/advisory capacity while the issue was being prepared, and (with the assistance of our two children, Steve and Sharon) the collating and mailing. We would also like to give thanks to WSFA for advancing the money so we could purchase the necessary supplies to publish the 'zine, and to all the contributors (especially Richard Delap) whose material appears within. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of artists Dany Frolich and Dave Jenrette, both of whose works were omitted from the list of credits; Dany's work appears on pg. 1, and Dave's on pg. 63. And we would like to apologize to the many persons whose work was squeezed out of this issue because of a shortage of space (we had to end the thing somewhere....); we had hoped to give some of them a bit of space in these editorial pages--we will, time and space permitting, include the three "WAHF" letters omitted from the letter-section, but we will not be able to include any poetry by Charles Ellis or Fred Phillips, as Bill Hixon left on a month-long business trip without letting us have the "poetry" folder (he left a folder, but it turned out to be the wrong one....).

Next, we would like to talk about the price of this and future issues of both TWJ and SOTWJ, and briefly discuss some of our plans with regard to these two mags. Despite what it says on pg. 5, the price of this issue will be $2.00 ($1.75 if bought from us in person; 8 issues of SOTWJ to SOTWJ subbers ($1.60 at current sub rates); and $1.50 to WSFA members ($1.75 if we have to mail it)). SOTWJ subs, which were scheduled to go up Jan. 1 1975 to 8/$2.00, will remain at 10/$2 for the foreseeable future (12/$2.50 or 12/£1.00 or the equivalent overseas), and will, for the time being at least, continue to include TWJ subs, prorated vs. SOTWJ subs according to length (actually, according to what our actual publishing costs are--which is why we are never sure of the cost of an issue until it has actually been run off). It is our hope that WSFA will, in the not-too-distant future, assume the financial responsibility for TWJ, and will set separate sub rates for TWJ. If/when this happens, SOTWJ will probably be renamed, and we will purchase a bunch of TWJ's from WSFA each time an issue is published to send to those SOTWJ subbers who elect to continue receiving TWJ via their SOTWJ subs rather than by direct subscription from WSFA. In addition, at this time SOTWJ will switch from its current policy of 22-page double-issues at 10/$2 to 22-page single-issues at 5/$2.

As you can see from this issue, we are in the process of switching TWJ over to a multi-editor magazine, with each editor entirely responsible for the gathering of material for, editing, and (where possible) preparation of his own section(s). (We hope to continue in somewhat the same capacity as we did for this issue.) In the future, we hope the TWJ contributors will send their material to the specific section editor(s) listed on page 5 of this issue (or, you may continue to send it to us, if it's easier for you to do so--but remember that this may delay its getting into TWJ). Material for SOTWJ (news, short reviews you'd rather see in SOTWJ than TWJ, and other material you'd rather see in SOTWJ or material of such a nature that it would not be published in TWJ (such as mystery reviews and the like) or would be delayed too much if held for the less-frequent TWJ) should continue to be sent to us. Future TWJ's will be at least quarterly (as close to bi-monthly as

(Over)

FLUX DE MOTS (Continued) --

possible), and SOTWJ will be published at a rate as close to two issues every two weeks (i.e., a bi-weekly double-issue) as we can manage until TWJ becomes more frequent (and then will slow down considerably as TWJ picks up the slack). We hope to include a mimeo "news" and miscellany section in each TWJ, space permitting (but the smaller, more frequent issues are likely to be rather squeezed for space, so SOTWJ may have to continue to carry the news burden on its own). SOTWJ will also continue to carry club news, minutes, convention news (and short reports, if we can find someone to write them), letters related to it rather than TWJ, our fanzine "reviews"/contents-listings (this is one item which might end up in TWJ if we were to include a mimeo "news" section), book news/announcements (Dave Weems would like to start including this in TWJ, but its slower schedule and probable lack of space may make this impossible), book reviews (we hope to return to an expanded review section in SOTWJ--we'll not be competing with TWJ in this area, however, as a smaller TWJ will mean less space for book reviews, and SOTWJ may end up getting more rather than less reviews; Dave will be including some short reviews in TWJ along with the longer ones, but there should be more than enough of these for both 'zines), film notes, mystery news/reviews, etc.--in short, SOTWJ will include just about the same type of material that it has in the past, with the listings, etc. more condensed and the review and other sections expanded. (We hope to examine any material rejected by the TWJ Section Editors before it is returned to the sender--they are going to be rejecting more than we have in the past because of their tighter space requirements, and much of this will be deserving of publication.) Oh, yes--if you send something to us for TWJ, please be sure and so indicate; if you send something to us to one of the Section Editors for TWJ and you do not want it to go into SOTWJ if TWJ can't use it, be sure and indicate this, too.

There are many changes under consideration or in progress, so the next few issues of TWJ will contain much in the way of experimentation/innovation on the part of the Staff. And SOTWJ, which has of this writing still not quite caught up with the backlog produced by our eye trouble and surgery, will, as we noted above, also be undergoing some changes. We hope our readers and contributors will bear with us during our retrenchment, and will give us as much constructive criticism and feedback as possible. Your comments/suggestions re the changes which are contemplated, in progress, and/or already made will be carefully considered by our staff, and will be very much appreciated by all involved.

One change upon which we would like to comment in this editorial is the omission of the TWJ Volume 12 Index from this issue, even though it appears in the ToC. For various reasons we decided at the last minute to include the Index separately in the package containing this issue, rather than stapling it into the issue. It was our feeling, and that of Dave and Bill, that it would be more useful to the recipients if included as a separate item. This way, it can be filed separately with future indexes to come, and serve as a handy reference for those of you with files of TWJ. The cost of the Index, we should point out, is not included in the price of this issue. (We would also like to credit Bill Hixon for the publication of the Index (on the WSFA mimeo); the only section in this issue which we ran off is the one you're reading now. Bill had some problems with the paper he used for the Index, so some of the pages didn't come out too well. Also, for this reason we have fewer copies of the Index than we do copies of #84, so the only persons who will receive the Index are subscribers, contributors, traders, and those WSFA members who request a copy and pick it up at a meeting. Anyone else who would like a copy may purchase one (assuming there are any left after the above distribution has been made) at a price to be set later (probably 35¢). (There was going to be a cover for the Index, but Bill didn't get these to us either. We will eventually provide a cover for the entire series of Indexes.)

(Cont. next page)

FLUX DE MOTS (Continued) --

A few quick comments on various aspects of this issue, before moving on to other subjects: Bill and Dave had some problems with the repro on some of the pages, so some of the pages in some of the issues may not be as good as others. They discovered, for one thing, that the masters didn't provide a clean run the second time around (e.g., in the case of the ToC, when they had to rerun half the pages because half the stack was reversed the first time through). Next time around, they should have fewer problems.... ## In collating, we noted that about half of the rear covers were of a thinner stock than the front covers; since all the cover stock came out of the same packages, it would appear that the manufacturer "cheated" a bit here.... ## We thank Dave for renaming us on pg. 5, but the name is still "Don".... ## The deadline for material for #85 is still Feb. 1st; however, this issue is a bit later than planned, so if you send something off for #85 within a few days after you receive this issue, chances are it will still make the issue (letters, in particular, are solicited from recipients of this issue). Issue #85 is still going to feature material about Isaac Asimov, but whether the issue is published as an "Asimov Special" or just a regular issue with an abundance of Asimov-related material will depend upon whether or not we can come up with some more features relating to Asimov. We urge anyone reading this who could contribute something relating to Asimov to do so for #85. ## We hope to make #86 the '74 Wrap-up issue, among other things--and we plan to publish #86 in May--so we would appreciate volunteers to write various kinds of material concerning SF/Fantasy activity during 1974. We hope that those persons who contributed '73 wrap-up material for this issue would be willing to do the same for '74--and we hope to cover some of those areas we missed for '73. But if the deadline we set for #86 is too soon for you to make the wrap-up issue, we'd still like your wrap-up for a later (hopefully, no later than #87) issue. ## Speaking of the '73 wrap-up material in this issue, we are sorry it is appearing so late in the year. Because of our eye surgery, we didn't even get around to asking for this material until the spring--and our English trip delayed #84 by at least three months. ## Note that the post-code for Eric Bentcliffe on pg. 5 should begin with "CW4" rather than "GW4". ## Bonnie Dalzell's art folio was going to be published on a heavier paper stock, but it wouldn't feed through the offset machine properly, so Dave & Bill ended up using 20-pound paper. (With hindsight, we note that under the circumstances it probably would have been better being published on one side only.) ## On some pages, the margins are too small and the page too solid with type; in future issues, greater margins and more double-columning will be used. ## The Again, Dangerous Visions review was originally promised to SF COMMENTARY and KWALHIOQUA; however, when the former failed to appear and the latter had an aborted press run of only a few issues, Richard responded to an earlier request from us and sent us the review for TWJ. Since then, SFC came through with it, so this is actually the third appearance of the review. ## Editorial comments scattered thru the issue (and in the lettercolumn) are those of the individual Section Editors, and not our own. In the future, we shall ask the eds. to identify their comments by appending their initials rather than "ed.".

In case any of you failed to note the occasion, the long-overdue TWJ #80 came out in August. It was a rather large issue, and a shorter-than-usual run. It is now in very short supply, and costs $2. Among the contents are articles by Tom Swann, Alexis Gilliland, Harry Warner, Jr.; Mark Owings' "Electric Bibliograph XII" (Eric Frank Russell); poetry by James Ellis (did we say "Charles" on pg. 121?), Barbara Keller, Terry Kuch, Fred Phillips; a Jay Kay Klein con report; fan fiction by W.G. Bliss, Jim Newton, & Mae Strelkov; an art folio by Walt Simonson; book & film reviews by Delap, Newton, Faig, Wadholm, Marlow, Patten, Linden, Smoire, Derry, & Hall; fanzine reviews by Sandra Miesel & Mike Glyer; prozine reviews by Delap; lots of letters and lots of illos by lots of people; & misc. items. (A quick count shows 128 numbered pages + several unnumbered pages (incl. the art folio) & covers.)

(Over)

FLUX DE MOTS (Continued) --

Now it's time for the three WAHF's omitted from the letter-column:

LEIGH EDMONDS, POBox 74, Balaclava, Vic 3183, Australia (15/5/74)

/Written in response to our late request for a report on SF activity in Australia in '73 for the '73 wrap-up section/ . . . As it turns out I haven't been able to find anybody who could or is willing to write about the professional side of sf activity in Australia at such short notice. I think this is partly because very little happened last year and because you've caught us in the middle of organizing AUSSIECON and the '74 national Con. If you'll settle for a very quick summary off the top of my head, there were no stf books I know of and no TV productions apart from the stuff that's made in the U.S. The Space Age Bookshop in Melbourne flourished as usual; about a third of its business is science fiction, the rest is counter-culture, occult, mysticism and that sort of thing. David Grigg and I wrote a science-fiction play called "Utopia", which was rejected by the Melbourne Theatre Company with an extremely helpful and encouraging rejection letter which suggested that we reqork it into a radio (or maybe a screen) play. ## Quite a deal happened on the fannish side, none of it very exciting as far as things go apart from winning the Worldcon bid. . . .

BARRY GILLAM, 4283 Katonah Ave., Bronx, NY 10470 (3/6/74)

. . . As for #83, the covers are excellent, even if I'm not sure how Alexis Gilliland's dragon stands on those oddly distributed legs. The Chick Derry illustrations are dreadful. Alexis Gilliland's Wandering Jew cartoon (F-8) is a delight. ## Mark Owings' Laumer bibliography will be extremely useful since, as my Glory Game review witnesses, I am just now discovering his work for myself. ## A random critical pot shot: Mike Shoemaker chides Aldiss (N-4) for neglecting such "recognized classics" as Slan. Recognized by whom? . . .

MANLY WADE WELLMAN, Chapel Hill, NC (26/6/74)

This is to express my flattered delight in the review of Worse Things Waiting, by Jim Goldfrank, in your issue of #83. ## He seems to have read the book and dug it in huge spadefuls, and to know the sort of thing he's reviewing. I hope that bunch of stories, written over many years, come up to something like deserving the things he says. ## A point: In mentioning John George Hohman's Pow-Wows book, Mr. Goldfrank seems to refer it to the Mythos, which I take to be a term of Lovecraftsmanship--a suggestion that here is one of the baleful imaginative library of tomes you can find in the basement of Miskatonic U. Not so. Lovecraft was great, but he didn't imagine everything. Within recent years anyway, you could buy a copy of Pow-Wows in most Pennsylvania German bookstores, and I hope you still can. I have a copy on my shelf right now, and I think it derives here and there from another book right next to it, the Grand Albert (Albertus Magnus), which I hear you can't burn or sink in the ocean or give away. You must bury it with a funeral service. What a stupid way to treat a valuable and interesting book. . . .

And speaking of WAHF's for #83, Bill left out James Tiptree (who asked that his letter not be published), and Bruce Gillespie, who responded both to TWJ #83 and a recent SON (recent when he wrote his letter, anyway). Bruce refers to the "aborted" issue of KWAL to which we referred on pg. 123 of this issue, and which we reviewed in the issue of SOTWJ to which he was responding: "Somehow you received and reviewed the nonexistent SFC 40/KWALA 11. It's a long, sad story which I tell in SFC 40, but basically Richard Delap sent out copies of the bogus issue, and he was supposed to give strict instructions for no reviews at all. Ed Cagle gave 100 of them to Richard, destroyed the other 400, and gafiated. I'm still trying to pick up the pieces. So please print this retraction as soon as possible: it might ease the minds of people who think I've struck them from my mailing list." ((We'd have printed this earlier, but it got mixed up with the TWJ 84 material we gave to Bill. --DLM))

(Cont. next page)

FLUX DE MOTS (Continued) --

We had planned to end this section at four pages, but we've received one (and only one) LoC to date on TWJ #80, and we feel it should go in TWJ rather than SOTWJ.

DENNIE LIEN, 2408 S. Dupont Ave., Apt. #1, Minneapolis, MN 55405 (9/12/74)

. . . I'm finding quite a bit of difficulty getting into the mood of commenting on a 30-month-old zine--wasn't inspired to do so until I got to Mark Owings' Electric Bibliograph and then only to say that I'm glad to see him back (if that's the word in this case) at doing this. (After doing occasional catch-as-catch-can biblios myself I'm currently trying to do a Robert Sheckley biblio at very nearly the scope of Mark's standard format, which has increased my already considerable respect for the work he must be putting into each of these.) ## Hal Hall's checklist of major sf awards seems a bit redundant, given the existence of Franson/de Vore work on the same topic, but it did serve the useful purpose of reminding me that there is one Hugo-winning novel I've never read: Clifton and Riley's They'd Rather be Right. (I'd offer high odds that this is the least read of such among fandom at large, having been oop since 1959.) ((The Checklist was included here as a quick-reference for those who don't have the Franson/de Vore work. --DLM))

Your account of the struggles to get #80 out is hilarious (in a sort of stomach-wrenching way) and possibly the best single item in the issue. (Not that I should be understood from this as urging that you run every issue 2½ years late so as to have funny stories to tell about it, but once was perhaps worth it.) ## Fan fiction should be read by those people who read fan fiction. I did rather like Don James' Howard parody, if only because it featured a Howard hero other than Conan for a change. ## "Sentient beings without fanzines are unthinkable" should go down in fannish history as one of the standard one-liners (or maybe it already has when my back was turned). ## And I also liked Mac's--story?--partly because I was not and am not quite sure if that's what it was.... ## If nothing else, ...And All the Stars a Stage certainly has a title "worth reading"; it's stuck in my mind since the 1960 AMAZING serialization, while the plot of the novel itself has badly faded. Shall reread soon.

Thanks to Mark Owings for notations on other biblios done by him and by others; the Doc Smith one I had forgotten about and the rest were new to me. I for one would greatly like to see reprints or updates of some of them (I realize that the Lafferty one, at least, is coming out in Mark's pamphlet series). ## And I knew of some of the mainstream-authors-of-sf-interest biblios; as you (Don) surmised at the time, my notes in TWJ #79 were pulled together in one active evening from my own at-hand collection and a few foggy memories, it being that or never quite getting around to doing the article at all. Glad it stirred up some interest/response. ## Lest someone suspect a fast one, I should have noted in my letter in #80 that the UNCANNY STORIES index which I mention from a mid-'60's DYNATRON was my own. ## I still miss Bob Jones and the Pulp Scene; if someone doesn't take up the slack I might have to try it with EERIE TALES. ((Please do!)) But I'd run out of rarities too soon (or, crueler fate, have to read too many of the pulps I've been collecting). ## I on the other hand am glad to see "book reviews of obscure titles by obscure authors"--more so than of titles reviewed elsewhere five or six times within a few months. Obscure items are by definition more interesting than common ones. ## A fanzine called URANUS? That title is bound to be the butt of jokes.

As always, I frequently disagree with Richard Delap in his judgments of sf/f movies of the year--and, as always, I am delighted that he's doing this. ## I've never forgotten I Drink Your Blood, if only to wonder why more grade B horror movie producers have not latched on to rabies as a gimmick. It seems a natural. As for I Eat Your Skin, it was my strong impression at the time (I never got around to checking on it) that this was a mid-'50's straight B-er retitled and re-released to provide a double-feature; certainly the title had little to do with the picture and vice versa. ## Corpse Grinders, I believe, was a re-release of an earlier title--at least, I've been hearing about this one for so long that it seems as though it

(Over)

FLUX DE MOTS (Continued) --

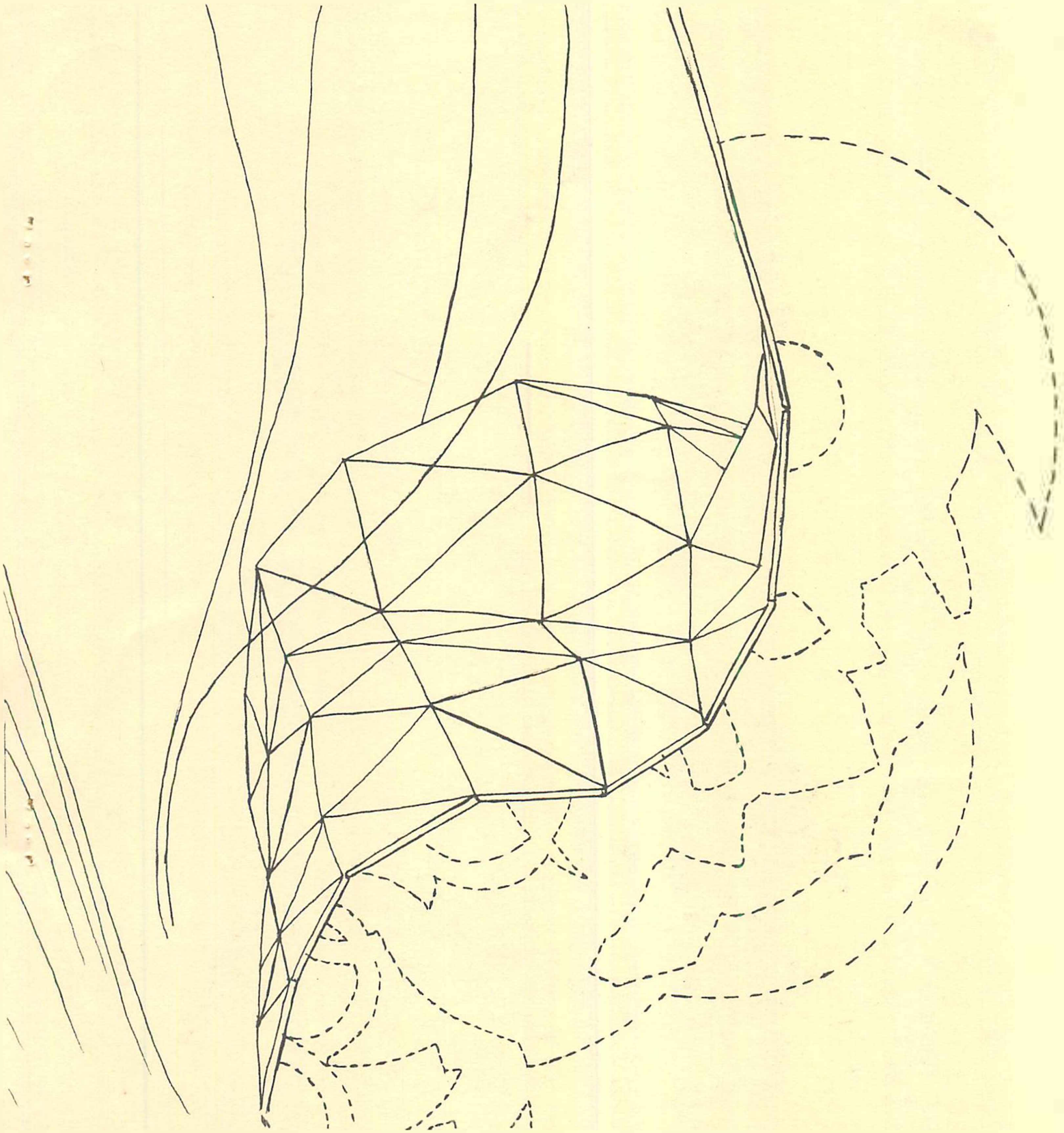
must have been around for years and years. Any my vote on Glen and Randa is emphatically on the negative side; I haven't trusted Baird Searles on a movie since.

Would have preferred Delap's magazine reviews in SOTWJ, though they're still enjoyable. But how can FANTASTIC be the "most" interesting of two White mags? ((At the time #80 was started, Delap's prozine reviews were appearing regularly in SOTWJ, but we were running his year-end wrap-ups in TWJ.)) ## The review of Si Mai Avait Gagné is a perfect example of what I meant above by liking to see "reviews of obscure titles by obscure authors" (obscure to sf readers anyway), since I've not seen this listed or reviewed anywhere else, in spite of its being out for six years. ## And that may be about all in my efforts to find comment hooks in an aging but gigantic fanzine. Except to say that I'm very glad you did finally publish it as planned, rather than scrapping the project and rescheduling the undated material. Would have left a nasty hole in my TWJ file--and besides, the end product is worth it.

Before closing this editorial section, we'd like to respond briefly to some of the comments made in the lettercolumn in this issue. To Martin Williams: The Indexes, as we stated above, are being pulled out of TWJ and shipped with rather than as part of the 'zine; this way, those who don't like indexes can simply throw them away, while others can file them away for ready reference. (And we are going back to #1!....) ## To Darrell Schweitzer: As noted earlier in this editorial section, many of the things about which you complain are changing (we hope for the better) as we retrench with TWJ and SOTWJ. ## To Richard Delap: We apologize for the typoes/omissions in your material in #83--the only proofreading we did for that issue was to scan the final typed copy for spelling, grammar, and coherence--we didn't proof the copy vs. the original material (that was and is the work of the individual section editors), so the omissions you note were virtually impossible to catch by the time the copy had reached us. There will also be a larger-than-usual number of typoes in the #84 copy, judging from what we have seen while scanning the pages during collating; #84 was done in a rather hurried fashion because of Bill's January business trip and other time-pressures. Future issues should see better proofreading, as the editors will have smaller chunks of material to work with at one time, and a less hectic schedule pressing upon them.

When this editorial section was contemplated, we had planned to include a news section; the idea was that these editors' pages would contain not just editorial commentary, but also some material of the type now appearing in SOTWJ. This would take some of the pressure off SOTWJ, and SOTWJ would appear only between issues of TWJ, to take up the slack between issues of the slower parent 'zine. As TWJ became more frequent, SOTWJ would become less frequent; if TWJ ever achieved the ideal monthly schedule, SOTWJ would either appear monthly, in between TWJ, or would cease regular publication, appearing only when necessary, as a TWJ supplement. It is our hope that the above can still be achieved--but not in this issue, at least--we couldn't write this editorial until the rest of the issue was ready, and we are under such time-pressure (the 'zine must be ready for mailing tomorrow) that we have no more time to go any further than this page. We regret that this means Jim Goldfrank's article re dognapping and Rick Gellman/Louis Spooner's announcement re the formation of a Fan Ride Board Central, plus some book/fanzine/film news and information intended for this issue will now have to wait until the post-catchup SOTWJ's (probably #173, which will not be typed until those issues already on stencil (#'s 167-172) have been run off and mailed out). If all goes well, SOTWJ should be caught up completely by mid-February '75, and then will begin the metamorphosis which we mentioned earlier in this section. ## Before closing, we'd like to note that extra copies of Bonnie's folio (without the cover page) are available at 25¢ each (a few copies with cover page are available @35¢).

-- DLM

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