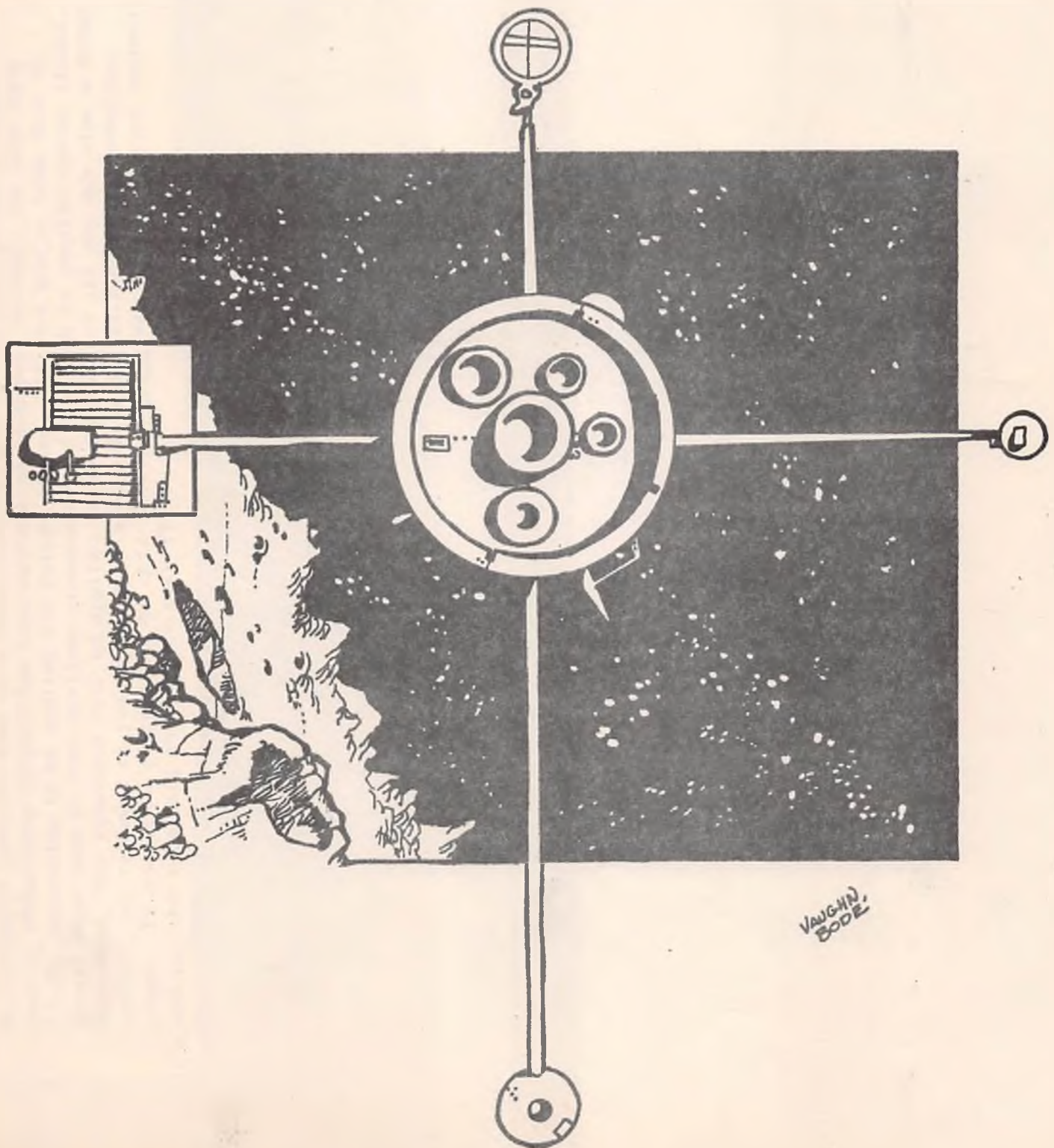


The **WSFA**

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

Issue Number 85: August 1975

IN MEMORIAM:

WILLIAM FITZGERALD JENKINS
("Murray Loinster")
16 June 1896-8 June 1975

* *

JAMES BENJAMIN BLISH
23 May 1921-30 July 1975

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Editor's Notes --

This issue is considerably later than we'd planned, for reasons stated in our mini-editorial on pg. L11. It is our hope and expectation that future issues will be both smaller and more frequent.

A coming issue (#86 or #87) will be a "Will F. Jenkins/Murray Leinster Memorial Issue". Anything anyone can contribute for this special issue would be most welcome--we'd like as complete a coverage of the man and his work as possible.

The "Stoned" Philosopher section is a new feature which we hope will catch on. If any of you have any ideas/theories/wild ideas you'd like to send in for publication, please do so. You may remain anonymous and let the "Stoned" Philosopher take all the brickbats. And, of course, commentary on the "Stoned" ideas presented therein are most welcome....

We especially need newspaper/magazine clippings from English-language publications anywhere in the world on any subject even remotely related to SF/Fantasy (or to the mystery field, for our new 'zine, THE MYSTERY NOOK). Persons whose clippings result in extracts will receive contributor's credit. (UK, where are you?)

Correction to page R20 of this issue: under review of story "Last Command", change ASF 1/57 to ASF 1/67. (And there are lots more to come, we're certain....)

Time permitting, we will include another TWJ and/or SOTWJ Index with this issue for subscribers and contributors. (But don't look too hard, as time is short....)

Cost of this issue ran to between \$190 and \$200. There are only 63 TWJ subbers remaining after our recent retrenchment (excluding WSFA members; WSFA will buy another 60 copies for its members), so at \$1.50/copy (\$1.25 to WSFA members, as we save 25¢ by not having to mail their copies; \$1.40 to subbers, who get a price break for subbing), we're pretty much in the red on this issue....

'Nuff for now. See you all in #86, out in two months or less (hopefully....).

Future TWJ's should come out every 6-12 weeks. This issue is \$1.50 (\$1.40 to subbers, \$1.25 to WSFA members and others who receive it by hand); prices for back-issues vary. Subs are \$2¢/printed page (one side of a sheet of paper) Class A, or (Class B) for minimum deposit of \$5, to be applied (pro rata) to TWJ and one or more, as you choose, of one of our other non-games publications (SOTWJ: 30¢ ea., 8/\$2; THE MYSTERY NOOK: 30¢ ea., 8/\$2; WASHINGTON S.F. NEWSLETTER: 15¢ ea., 7/\$1). Contributors receive issue(s) free in which their material is published; trades are by arrangement only (or via trade/sub for SOTWJ). Editorial Addresses: Book Reviews (except mysteries), Dave Weems (POBox 309, Oakton, VA 22124); Everything Else (incl. subs & trades), Don Miller (12315 Judson Rd., Wheaton, MD 20906). Overseas rates (& info on Overseas Agents, when such exist) available on request. -- DLM

THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE

A Review of 1974's Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films

by Richard Delap

SF/fantasy fans should have had little trouble finding the fantasy films which hit paydirt at theatre boxoffices during the year--some of them played for weeks on end, and are still making the rounds well into 1975. But a number of interesting "little" films died ghastly deaths, flashing in and out of summer drive-ins, or triplex and fourplex neighborhood theatres, with such rapidity that only the very keenest-eyed viewers would ever notice they were around at all. (In many smaller cities they've been kicked out entirely as the Big Hollywood Films scrape up every last nickel in months-long runs that seem to end only because the film has been sold to television.)

As one example of hard-to-find films, Cinemation's Idaho Transfer received a notable amount of advance notice in the trade press during 1973 (primarily because Peter Fonda was the director), but then reaped little note and no profits upon release. The film was a disastrous triumph of style over content, wherein the plot, about young people teleported to the future to begin civilization anew after a world-ravaging war, continually took a back seat to the brooding desert vistas of the future and the "socially significant" bickering among the time-travellers. The ending, in which technology is seen making a comeback at the expense of humanitarian values, is a twist that will remind SF fans of the numerous magazine stories during the '50's in which anything, no matter how silly, was fine for a concluding laugh and/or shock. Thomas Matthiesen's script was diffuse and undramatic, and Fonda's cast proved much too amateur to flesh out the one-dimensional characters.

On the other hand, American International Pictures (AIP) also returned to the simple plot by which it made a fortune on low-budget horror quickies during the late '50's and early '60's. The Bat People (a last-minute switch in title from It Lives By Night) did not get a heavy promotion, however, ending up on the bottom half of double-bills and sold to television before the year was over. Although the plot was strictly from the boneyard of dead clichés, the film was surprisingly colorful, and watching it was like getting a good dose of nostalgia for those movie days when every new horror picture was predictable but often still fun to watch. One scene in particular, in which hundreds of bats batter themselves against a moving automobile until the windshield is smeared with bodies and blood, was a real chiller. The "monster" (a man transformed into a raging bat-beast after being bitten by a rabid bat) was just scary enough to thrill the kids and beset by just enough marital complications to keep the adults amusedly interested. In this kind of low-level but energetic film, the trite script doesn't hamper but rather adds to the fun.

The first "big" SF film of the year was John Boorman's Zardoz, which 20th Century-Fox pushed rather hard, only to be met with severe critical resistance and mild financial returns. The ellipsis title (from The Wizard of Oz) is indicative of the multi-level approach Boorman and co-scripter Bill Stair have used--simple or complex, depending on how you fathom it. The basic plot is quite straightforward--in the year 2293, a small enclave of Eternals, the immortal and intellectual elite, control the surrounding lands peopled with primitive human survivors. They maintain this control with specially-bred barbarians, who are ruled by the god Zardoz, a giant flying stone head created by the Eternals. The story revolves around the clash of wills between the Eternals and a mutant barbarian who sneaks aboard Zardoz and infiltrates their Utopian enclave.

(Over)

THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE (Continued) --

At this point, however, the story begins to branch out philosophical tendrils that snake in and out and around each other with such complexity that only the most quick-witted and intelligent of viewers are going to withstand the urge to tear out their hair in utter confusion. The primary problem in all this intricacy is that it culminates in a disappointingly standardized cliché, as if the writers felt they must apologize for making the audience put their brains in high gear to follow the intellectual entanglements.

Sean Connery, as the intelligent barbarian, seems miscast and has no personality on which the audience can focus, but the supporting characters provide some of the stability the film desperately needs to keep from flying all to pieces. A solid grounding in varied philosophies (including even a familiarity with the writings of Madame Blavatsky) will help viewers through sequences which go round in circles as the characters spout dialogue that seems pulled from nowhere.

On the plus side, the film is a visual wonder, with Geoffrey Unsworth's photography of brooding exteriors (filmed in Ireland) and sharply focused interiors expertly suited to the mood of each scene. Special effects work is first-rate. Overambitious in its development and not ambitious enough in its conclusion, Zardoz is an interesting but erratic film, fascinating to watch but not really very satisfying.

There was the usual number of small films rounding out the period, only a few of which I managed to see: Scope III's The Folks at Red Wolf Inn was a cheaply made and incredibly incompetent programmer featuring a cannibalistic old couple who prize pretty young girls; Sun International's Chariots of the Gods?, from Erich von Daniken's bestseller, was a crude, German-made documentary, in which the author's mishmash of speculations about astronauts from space is not very convincingly supported by this visual conglomerate; International Amusement's British-made Neither the Sea Nor the Sand, scripted by Gordon Honeycombe from his own novel of the occult, has had very few playdates and was not, from all reports, nearly as good as the book; AIP's Sugar Hill combined the black exploitation and horror genres (and featured Robert Quarry as a villainous gangster), but though critical reception was rather good, the picture did no more than average boxoffice; Cine Globe's Some Call It Loving, adapted from John Collier's famous short story "Sleeping Beauty", also received good notices--but just try to find the damned thing, since it's another one that just faded away altogether; Europix International's double-bill The Blood-Splattered Bride and I Dismember Mama, Box office International's The Sinful Dwarf, and International Amusement's The House of the Seven Corpses, The Vampires' Night Orgy, and Dracula's Great Love were all "little" pictures of such minor import that I have been able to find no information on them aside from trade reviews in BCX-OFFICE magazine, which is not very reliable from a critical standpoint.

With springtime the exploitation cheapies were beginning to flood the market once again, with distributors maintaining a low count of prints (which holds down investment costs), and moving them from area to area around the country. Unless you're in an area where a picture first breaks, you're likely to be watching a film so mangled and torn that you might as well avoid it if you're trying to make sense out of the script. (Of course, many of these scripts don't make sense to begin with, so it doesn't matter much to anyone other than cinema buffs, who will put themselves through any torture to be able to say "I've seen it". I know, I used to do it, but I'm getting away from the practice at last and only grind my teeth through a few of them each year now, just to keep my hand in, so to speak.)

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THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE (Continued) --

If you were on the lookout, you might have spotted the following: Dundee Productions' The Touch of Satan, Cannon's The Voodooist and Dracula's Blood, Omni Pictures' Plaything of the Devil, William Mishkin's That Man Is Pregnant! (a self-explanatory fantasy), American Films' Shriek of the Mutilated (ahh, and doesn't that one sound appetizing?), Film Ventures International's When Women Lost Their Tails, New Line's Legend of Spider Forest, Hallmark Releasing's Mark of the Devil, Part II, Crown International's Horror High, and AIP's relatively mildly titled Deranged, the latter a pinchpenny production that is one of the most utterly revolting and vile things ever put on film, certainly something to make even the most liberal of us wonder about the guy in the next seat who watches this stuff and licks his lips with something that looks like enthusiasm. The scares weren't on the screen when I saw this film; they were in the audience, which makes one feel not so guilty about putting on those burglar-proof door and window locks you bought after reading about the rising crime rate.

Vincent Price skedaddled off to England for another filmic round of mayhem and murder, but Madhouse, based on Adam Hall's novel Devilday, seemed awfully weak-willed for a horror picture. The script gets progressively absurd and Price, along with co-stars Peter Cushing and Robert Quarry, looks rather tired hustling through what obviously was a very rushed production.

Paramount's Man on a Swing was an uneven but nonetheless interesting murder drama involving a psychic, smoothly directed by Frank Perry and livened by an excessive but watchable performance by Joel Gray. AIP took over distribution for Cinerama at this time and handled the British-made werewolf drama The Beast Must Die, an aptly titled film that died quietly at the boxoffice. Cinerama/AIP's The Spectre of Edgar Allan Poe is listed for release at this time, but AIP seems to have held it up for a time and it doesn't seem to have actually been shown in theatres until well into 1975. Warner Bros.' Welcome to Arrow Beach, starring the late Laurence Harvey and dealing with cannibalism, apparently had a few playdates but did so poorly that it was pulled out of distribution permanently. Walt Disney Productions' Herbie Rides Again was a popular sequel to The Love Bug, one of the studio's biggest fantasy successes, and Cinerama/AIP's The Mysterious Island of Captain Nemo proved that neither Jules Verne nor Omar Sharif are guaranteed boxoffice these days. Gerard Damiano's Memories Within Miss Aggie was a hardcore pornopic with horror overtones, the concept (minus the porno) very similar to William Faulkner's classic story "A Rose for Emily".

Warner Bros.' It's Alive is about a monstrous mutant baby who goes on a murderous rampage. The film has not yet had much playoff around the country, and critics have vilified it for its bloodthirstiness. But it has a music score by Bernard Herrmann, so it can't be all bad.

Cinematic's Son of Dracula, with a title to appeal to the horror fans and a cast (Harry Nilsson and Ringo Starr) to appeal to the music fans, apparently didn't appeal much to either group, and with good reason. In place of plot we were offered a number of incongruous musical interludes and mumbled dialogue that sounded as if it were being invented by the cast as the camera rolled, with the finished product run through a Mixmaster, colored with Easter egg dye, and shoved out into theatres just to get the mess out of the laboratory. One of the year's worst, bar none.

Columbia's The Golden Voyage of Sinbad had been awaited by fans of special effects master Ray Harryhausen for months. But the film astonished the studio when it went into immediate high gear and grossed unexpected millions. (It did so well, in fact, that Columbia is preparing a major promotion for the 1975 re-

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THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE (Continued) --

issue of The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad), an early Harryhausen extravaganza originally released in 1958.) It is sad to report that Golden Voyage was mostly tarnished brass. Harryhausen's work was, as always, excellent, but the in-between filler (in other words, Brian Clemens' script and story) was so simple-minded it was a bore to anyone over about ten years of age. Harryhausen's films are almost always weakened by insipid scripts. Such a shame, for a combination of strong story with those spectacular effects could be mindboggling. Sigh... maybe someday....

Summer business sizzled when Bryanston's X-rated Flesh for Frankenstein (billed in the ads as Andy Warhol's Frankenstein) played to packed houses all across the country. The sex was softcore, so that the "X" brought only minor censorship problems--for the bluenoses, you see, find on-screen fucking far more injurious to our morals than such minor excesses as decapitation and slinging bloody guts over the heads of an audience (the film was in 3-D, and the glasses you have to wear are still a pain in the eyeball). Later in the year Bryanston also released Blood for Dracula (a.k.a. Andy Warhol's Dracula), in which the thirsty Count travels to Italy in search of virgin blood, which he endlessly vomits up when he discovers that young Italian maidens are as sullied as they come. In spite of its explicit bad taste, Dracula was by far the best of the two films, livened with moments of very funny dialogue that put a keen, self-mocking edge to the emphasis on gore.

One of the year's major disappointments was the Warner Bros. film version of Michael Crichton's novel, The Terminal Man, which was, to put it as kindly as possible, awful. Under Mike Hodges' plodding direction, George Segal gives a terrible performance as a victim of medical tampering, his brain implanted with a computer hookup that is supposed to bring a halt to his recurring rages caused by epileptic-like seizures. The process doesn't work and Segal turns into a mad human time bomb, exploding in murderous fury at increasingly frequent intervals. The hospital sets, loaded with all sorts of machinery and white-gowned extras, are far more interesting than the corny melodrama unfolded before them; but interest in that crisp background palls after a few scenes, and viewers are advised to go home to bed after the first thirty minutes (theatre managers frown on patrons sleeping in the seats).

Paramount's The Parallax View, an excellent and much underrated drama of politics and assassination, might be classified by some as science fiction of a social bent, but it's a borderline case. The same might be said for another Paramount film, Francis Ford Coppola's The Conversation, a symbolic present-day assessment of our sly creep towards the world of 1984. Neither film is SF in the strictest sense, yet beneath the surface of each is an SF idea agitating the current of everyday realities. And both are examples of top-notch filmmaking.

Another surprise hit was Mammoth Films' Flesh Gordon, which began as a relatively high-budget porno film that turned out so well the producers decided to try for saturation bookings. They trimmed out the hardcore footage--oh, you'll see an erect penis now and then out of the corner of your eye, and the background extras certainly don't seem to be faking all their imitations of lustful intercourse--then upped the special effects budget by several thousands of dollars. The film still carries an "X" rating but the action is strictly softcore. What is really so amazing about the film is that in spite of all this last-minute tampering, in spite of the puerile and juvenile nature of the dialogue, in spite of a blankfaced cast who can't quite figure out what they're supposed to be doing--in spite of everything, the picture is still enjoyable. It's brisk, crazy, silly

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THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE (Continued) --

and sometimes even sexy, and there's no way to do anything but laugh when Flesh just barely escapes the clutches of a giant monster, who snaps its fingers and mutters, "Aw, fuck." It is, by all accounts, a bad film, but it's a fun bad film, its deficiencies aiding rather than subtracting from its entertainment value.

The summer programmers were numerous this year, but little if anything of interest emerged from the crowd. Paramount's Captain Kronos: Vampire Killer and Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell, both from the British Hammer studios, were two of the dreariest rehashes ever, Kronos hovering between colorful adventure and satire but emerging on the bad side of insipid, Frankenstein the shoddiest of this endless, deteriorating series, crass in its steal from Val Lewton's Bedlam and shameful in its waste of Peter Cushing. Columbia's The Mutations was also stolen from an early film, Tod Browning's Freaks, mingling the plot with man/plant monsters straight out of the worst of the cheapo horror flicks of the '50's. Chosen Survivors was a Mexican-American co-production about an underground scientific experiment going haywire, with killer bats stealing every scene from a cast of seasoned professionals who should have had better sense than to get involved in this silliness in the first place.

Cinerama's W was a mediocre pseudo-Psycho suspense drama starring Twiggy; Capital Productions' Blood Waters of Dr. Z is a new title for a 1973 release originally titled Zaat; Warner Bros.' Craze starred Jack Palance as a crazy killer with a penchant for knocking off a cast of respected British character actors, but Henry Seymour's novel Infernal Idol proved a weak base for an even weaker film; Cinerama's Digby, The Biggest Dog in the World was a low-budget fantasy for the family trade with only a little less grace than its title character, and Seizure, though aimed at adult audiences, seemed to be geared for five-year-old mental capacities. Avco Embassy's Homebodies received lukewarm reviews from the critics, and the public didn't seem much interested in the problems of a houseful of murdering geriatrics; Centrum International's UFO: Target Earth was incompetent in every department, except for a few special effects created by a computer, which were pretty to look at but had absolutely nothing to do with the plot; Allied Artists' Who?, based on Algis Budrys' well-known SF novel, starred Elliott Gould and sounded very promising, but the critics roasted it and it disappeared back into the vaults after only a few scattered playdates. International Amusement's The Thirsty Dead and The House of Seven Corpses, New Line's Shock, Hampton International's Naked Evil, International Producers' I, a Demon, and Hallmark Releasing's The House That Vanished are all listed as summer releases, but I have not seen a one and can find little or no information on them.

At the Discon II World SF Convention, SF fans packed the auditorium to see a rough cut of Alvy Moore's production of Harlan Ellison's A Boy and His Dog, scripted and directed by L. Q. Jones. The first night's showing was aborted when the sound equipment failed to work, but the second night (in which the crowds were even bigger and the auditorium, filled with cigarette smoke and trembling with a quiet rumble, bore a vague resemblance to a stag smoker mutated into a grotesque giant) went off as scheduled. The audience, perhaps fearful of criticizing an unfinished work print of the film, was generally noncommittal. But even disregarding the technical problems, most of which will disappear in the lab, the film must be classed a failure.

The opening 20 minutes are very close to brilliant, the dialogue reflecting the brittle, desperate attitudes of characters who are living in the wasted desert of America after a Third World War. The humor of the repartee between Vic and his "talking" dog, Blood, is sardonic and ripe with loving pain, capturing

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THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE (Continued) --

exactly the bond of friendship and survival instinct these two share. (It is not surprising to learn that Harlan did this portion of the script himself, before a writer's block took him out of action and Jones took over.) As in the original story, however, the plot begins to weaken considerably as Vic (played by Don Johnson) goes moon-eyed over a girl and follows her into the now-underground city to which the middle-class have retreated, creating a nightmare world deifying hypocrisy and standardization.

Jones, not content to underestimate the intelligence of his audience, finds it necessary to bolster the concept of middle-class idiocy with visuals, and he decorates his underground dwellers in clownwhite, painted-smile makeup. The effect is so ludicrous that it is not even funny, just pathetic, and the film never revovers.....

Special mention should be made of the contribution of Tim McIntire, who not only provides the voice for Blood but also wrote the music, a spare dramatic score that, especially in the early scenes, captures the film's mood perfectly. At this writing the film is set for release in mid-1975, and a very strong advertising campaign may sell it to the general public. But I wouldn't count on it.

Michael Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius novel, The Final Programme, reaches the screen under the bland title The Last Days of Man on Earth, released by Roger Corman's New World Pictures, "designed, written and directed" by Robert Fuest, who gave us the "Dr. Phibes" pictures. (Oddly enough, Moorcock receives no credit in the film's credits.) Jon Finch looks great as Jerry, but it is Jenny Runaker as the beautiful, deadly Miss Brunner, capturing both the crazy humor and undercurrent of pervading disaster, who brings Moorcock's story to life. What is so terrific about this film is its visual splendor: sets, costumes, props, everything is wild and ephemeral and crazy as hell. The dialogue is stuffed with throwaway wise-cracks, some of them unfortunately lost to American audiences in the welter of British accents and sometimes muddy sound recording; and the beautiful insanity of the novel's conclusion is destroyed by the exceedingly poor make-up work that does not achieve the satiric shock necessary to make the final scenes the dazzler they should be. Yet in spite of occasional lapses, the film is delightful to watch, loaded with offhand humor--one scene featuring a group of nuns playing the slot machines is screamingly funny, but flashes by so quickly that if your nose is in your popcorn box you'll miss it--and captivating in its witty display of overkill decadence.

With the fall season came Paramount's release, after months of delay, of Phase IV, directed by expert graphics artist Saul Bass (who created the marvelous title design and still photography for Hitchcock's Psycho, among many other award-winning achievements). When dealing with live people, however, Bass doesn't seem to know what to do with them. Nigel Davenport and his co-stars spend most of the time looking for bits of business to liven up Mayo Simon's undernourished script about ants and the danger they present to man when they undergo a rapid increase in intelligence (unexplainedly triggered by some sort of cosmic flare, or something equally vague). The photography of the ants is often breathtaking, but the film is overloaded with artsy-craftsy camera angles and "pretty" shots that are shoveled in with the blatant intemperance of television commercials. It is visually pretentious and dramatically without form, unsalvageable and a waste of everyone's talents.

At about the same time Paramount unleashed another loser, William Castle's Shanks, starring French mime Marcel Marceau as a mute puppeteer who raises the

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THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE (Continued) --

dead. The critics were merciless, and although Alex North received an Academy Award nomination for his musical score, the film disappeared very quickly and I never had a chance to see it.

Bryanston's The Texas Chainsaw Massacre was another of those blood-and-guts quickies likely to produce little but nausea (why people will spend \$3 to throw up when vinegar and lemon juice has the same effect for far less money is beyond my understanding). Cinerama's Dark Places, a British production made in 1972 and only now finding release in the U.S., was a turgidly plotted horror thriller, not at all aided by the presence of Christopher Lee. Europix International's Dead of Night told of a young soldier returning home after he has turned into a ghoul, but even as fine an actress as Lynn Carlin is reduced to spouting gibberish in this mess of stupidity. Cinemation's The Horrible House on the Hill, L-T Films' God Bless Dr. Shagetz, 20th Century-Fox's The House on Skull Mountain, Nolan Productions' The Gardener, and Cambist's Vampyres were all scheduled for release near year's end, but none of them has gone into wide circulation, and information is so sketchy that I list them here only for the sake of completion. Fanfare's Persecution is a British-made horror drama starring Lana Turner, but release was delayed, it has recently been retitled The Terror of Sheba, and it may get a better payoff in 1975. The Wicker Man, another British film, has been under wraps for over a year, and while British and European reviews were good, Warner Bros. is apparently at a loss as to how to sell the picture over here. It might show up in '75, or it might end up on television, or it might just disappear altogether.

Year's end, as usual, brought a rash of "big" movies. Universal's Earthquake was another borderline thing, a "humongous" catastrophe of buildings, elevated highways, and a very expensive cast of stars thrown to the ground by a giant quake as the famed California fault hunches its shoulders for a moment. The picture was quite bad, interlaced with a variety of cornball domestic melodramas and momentary heroisms; but it was a rousing financial success, likely because of the studio's high-power advertising campaign calling attention to "Sensurround", an effective sound system which assaults the eardrums with vibrations that make it seem as if the theatre were trembling violently.

20th Century-Fox's Phantom of the Paradise, written and directed by Brian de Palma (who last year helmed the exceptionally good Sisters), received a very mixed reception from critics and no support from the public. This satirical Faustian updating of Phantom of the Opera had its share of weaknesses--a pretty but insipid heroine, a slowly paced opening that takes too long to build up steam--but they are generally quite minor when set against the film's strengths, which include good performances by William Finley as the love-struck Phantom and Paul Williams (who also did the excellent music) as the Phantom's modernly evil adversary. The dialogue is fast and sharp, bolstered by some quick visual humor that borders on the vulgar without ever crossing over. De Palma is one of the best of the new directors, and it will be interesting to see what he comes up with next.

AIP's Abby is a black exploitationer modelled on The Exorcist, and while I haven't seen it yet, all reports indicate it is a somewhat better film than you might expect.* Filmmation Associates' Journey Back to Oz is an animated version of L. Frank Baum's famous story, but it's playing off very slowly, so you can expect it to turn up anytime during the coming year. Paramount's The Little Prince, likewise taken from a children's classic, is a musical production with more visual than aural pleasure, the Lerner-Love song score so uninspired that one wondered how the case could remember the melodies long enough to sing them.

(Over)

THE MANIFOLD FLAVORS OF BLOOD AND BAD TASTE (Continued) --

Judging by the cut-rate quality of Walt Disney Productions' live-action features over the past few years, I should have been prepared for the ineptitude of The Island at the Top of the World, based on Ian Cameron's novel The Lost Ones. But my happy memories of Disney's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and the knowledge that modern special effects can be dazzling led me once again down that primrose path. Island is so dreadful that every copy of the film should be burned as a disgrace to the business of entertainment. The cast, to a last man (and woman, even a damned dog), is so unresponsive that one can almost watch their eyes reading cue cards. The matte shots and special effects (including a giant whale, a volcanic eruption, a balloon airship) are so obviously fake that even the smallest child will not be fooled (that is, if she or he can manage to stay awake through all that boring dialogue long enough to see them). And Maurice Jarre's music does nothing but drone away on low notes, sounding as if it were recorded at the bottom of a deep well. This may be the last Disney film I go to see. Since the bankers took over the studio, the films have all lost that spark of imagination that made Disney films, even at their most saccharine, beautiful to see.

The year ended with the release of 20th Century-Fox's Young Frankenstein, Mel Brooks' wacky homage to the Universal films of the '30's. The excesses of Blazing Saddles have fortunately been discarded for a more refined (if that word can be used for anything created by Brooks) humor that goes for the soft pleasant chuckle more often than the guffaw. Gene Wilder, Peter Boyle (as the creature), Marty Feldman, and Madeline Kahn are superb, and the Wilder/Boyle musical number, "Putting on the Ritz", is one of the most truly funny scenes Brooks has ever devised. It is a loving rather than garish spoof and Brooks has honored his source. Even the sets have been recreated from the Universal originals, and the film is in glorious black-and-white. Like all Brooks' films, there are slow moments here and there and bits of humor that aren't as funny on the screen as they must have looked on paper; but all in all the film is a delightful entertainment, much better than we had any right to expect, and certainly refreshing after this year of coarse and brutal carnage.

*Since this was written I've seen Abby, which will teach me to stop paying attention to "all reports". It's an awful thing, poorly written, poorly acted (except for a few minor roles), and hovering dangerously close to sick parody. To make matters worse, production values are mucho cheapo, and it all looks as if it had been filmed through the bottom end of a coke bottle. Forget it.

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REVIEW EXTRACTS (From the Press) --

Last Days of Man on Earth (BOSTON AFTER DARK 8/4/75; sent in by David McGirr; reviewer Mike Baron; Written & Dir. by Robert Fuest; Prod. by John Goldstone & Sandy Lieberman; Based on Moorcock's novel, The Final Programme; w/Jon Finch, Jenny Runeacre): "... a film that approaches the subject [of eschatology] with uncanny intelligence, presence of mind and wit ... a stylish, acid comedy ... What Fuest has done is to mold the transparent [Moorcock character Jerry] Cornelius into an amusing, believable, insufferable character superbly played by Jon Finch. ... Fuest's decadence is a graceful thing, glimpsed as part of the backdrop. ... The Last Days of Man on Earth is a clever film with troubling undercurrents. It is open-ended and should survive the passage of time despite the eventual obsolescence of all the human vagaries with which it deals."

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REVIEW EXTRACTS (FILMS) (Continued) --

Journey Back to Oz (Filmmation; feature-length cartoon variation on The Wizard of Oz, w/voices of Liza Minnelli (Dorothy), Milton Berle (Cowardly Lion), Mickey Rooney (Scarecrow), Danny Thomas (Tin Woodman), Rise Stevens (Glinda), Ethel Merman (wicked witch), Mel Blanc (her pet bird), Paul Lynde (Pumpkinhead), Herschel Bernardi (Woodenhead the Horse), Jack E. Leonard (a singing signpost)) -- (WASH. STAR-NEWS 24/12/74; Donia Mills): "If the quality of the animation and writing matched the voices, the producers would have quite a treat here, instead of a picture to merely amuse the kids and leave the parents indifferent. . . Visually, the kids are likely to be captivated by the bright colors, splashy abstract backgrounds, and imaginative montage effects--though the trained eye will detect the cheap and static drawing techniques usually restricted to two or three layers. . ."; (WASH. POST 1/1/75; Judith Martin): ". . . [the animated figures] are all cliches derived from previous animated features. . . the villains are a herd of green elephants who look like so many Dumbos on speed. The plot is a mishmash of Oz and invented themes. . . There is an effort to make the theme 'Have faith in yourself', but this is belied by the deus ex machina used in every time of stress. And even the songs. . . are trite."

Rollerball (United Artists; Dir. Norman Jewison; w/James Caan, John Houseman, John Beck, Ralph Richardson, Moses Gunn, Maud Adams; Screenplay by William Harrison, based on his ESQUIRE short story "The Rollerball Murders") -- (WASH. STAR 2/7/75; Bob Menaker): ". . . projects a white-on-white, almost antiseptic world [in the 21st century] where there is little violence, but also little individualism. There are no nations, only giant corporations. And because there are no wars, the corporations have invented a substitute for it, a game called rollerball, a kamikaze combination of wrestling and roller derby. . . After doing away with Jewison's pretensions. . . [that the film was "intentionally violent to make a statement against violence"] we are left with a fairly shallow story. . . Rollerball is the kind of movie that gives science fiction a bad name."; (WASH. POST 2/7/75; Gary Arnold): "Jewison and his collaborators have succeeded in making Rollerball [the game] . . . look visually exciting and frightening and technically feasible. Unfortunately, the expository scenes are so solemn, monotonous and attenuated that Jewison is in danger of losing his audience in the lengthy intervals between game days. ~~it~~ By succeeding brilliantly with the spectacle of the game but failing to create and sustain interest in the dramatic material, Jewison leaves himself heavily dependent on the sheer violence of Rollerball. As things have turned out, it's not only the premise for a picture but a probable picture-saver. . . Jewison seems to have stepped into a familiar trap of futuristic pictures. He makes the future look so sterile and alienating that one tends to be alienated by the movie depiction itself. . ."

Phantom of the Paradise (Dir. Brian De Palma; THE WASH. POST 19/12/74; Reviewed by Gary Arnold) -- ". . . visually witty and inventive. If it were also consistently funny, the picture would be a new classic. Since it's funny in fits and starts, we're left with a somewhat tentative classic, definitely worth seeing and supporting but not quite the satirical breakthrough that might have been. ~~##~~ When Phantom of the Paradise clicks, notably in the production numbers that satirize rock performers and audiences in their recent and perhaps terminal state of decadence, it demonstrates a spunky, flamboyant sense of humor. When it's good, this picture is virtually irresistible. Unfortunately, Phantom goes slack or flat almost as often as it soars. . . De Palma has tried to synthesize the horrifying aspects, deliberate and unconscious, in contemporary rock music and pop culture with such classic horror stories as the Faust legend, The Phantom of the Opera, and The Picture of Dorian Gray. . . [with] an excess of Faust and a scarcity of Phantom. . . De Palma has the characters sell their souls to the devil, but his stars don't seem to have enough devil in their souls. Williams' score underlines the problem: His

(Over)

REVIEW EXTRACTS (FILMS) (Continued) --

songs aren't bad, but they aren't particularly funny or satirical either. . . Try as he may, Williams is essentially too pop to ridicule pop. . . De Palma is probably more vaudevillian than storyteller, and it will be interesting to see if he can devise a cinematic structure that supports his strengths and minimizes his weaknesses. Phantom of the Paradise doesn't conceal the weaknesses, but it certainly reveals how enjoyable and invigorating De Palma's brand of vaudeville can be."

Island at the Top of the World (Walt Disney Productions; Dir. Robert Stevenson; based on Ian Cameron's novel The Lost Ones; w/David Hartman; WASH. STAR-NEWS 21/12/74; reviewed by Donia Mills) -- ". . . a reasonable and enjoyable facsimile of a rousing period adventure saga. . . The movie's big attraction is the steady succession of elaborate special effects . . . The overall effect is bound to be an impressive one for any members of the family tolerant enough to overlook the distinction between scale models and the real thing, and especially for those young enough not to notice the difference. . ."

Space Is the Place (Dir. John Coney; Screenplay by Joshua Smith; Prod. by James Newman; w/Sun Ra & his Solar Arkestra; BOSTON PHOENIX 20/5/75; reviewer Mike Baron; sent in by David McGirr) -- ". . . Though jazz and science fiction have met before, seldom have they fused so effectively as in Space Is the Place . . . The story is an allegory, a struggle between the Mystic Ra (the Myth of the Black Race) and jive-talkin' Destiny, who threatens to swamp the black race with false, white bourgeois values unless Ra can pull them through. . . Sometimes the showdowns are deliberately ludicrous; a treacherous, wild humor runs through the film, underscoring the seriousness of the message. Director Coney, writer Smith and Ra himself firmly believe that the black race can strengthen itself by rising above the squalor of white industrial America and by drawing power from its music. ## Ra's allegorical solution is to take his people to another world . . . /But/ the filmmakers cannot resist the opportunity to present white men as sexually inadequate, capable of pleasure only through brutalizing women and helpless blacks. Such unsophisticated and insulting attitudes detract from an otherwise stunning effort. . ."

The Texas Buzz Saw Massacre (Prod. & Dir. by Tobe Hooper; most of acting by a group of Univ. of Texas students; WASH STAR-NEWS 25/11/74; reviewed by Dennis John Lewis) -- ". . . A low-budget film, ignored by many critics . . . /but/ hailed by horror-movie buffs as a worthy successor to Night of the Living Dead (1968) . . . relates a series of brutal murders on a dustblown Texas farm . . . based on a series of actual murders in a remote tourist area in Wisconsin in which a maniac made furniture of his victims. . . While the amateur quality of the film intrudes too often to keep the film on a consistent keel, there is enough raw talent and a winning satirical irreverence to keep the viewer's interest "

Andy Warhol's Dracula (Dir. Paul Morrissey; w/Udo Kier, Vittorio Di Sica, Joe Dallesandre) -- WASH. STAR-NEWS 25/12/74; reviewed by Lydia Preston): ". . . the companion piece to his Frankenstein of last season, is not so much horrifying as horrible--so horrible, in fact, that some people will get a big kick out of it. . . /it/ isn't as gruesome as Frankenstein, isn't in 3-D (which comes as a relief)--and is so ridiculous that it's often funny. . . Dracula is better than Warhol's Frankenstein, but then, that's like saying hanging is preferable to a firing squad. Either way, you lose."; (WASH. POST 21/12/74; reviewed by Tom Donnelly): ". . . as played by Kier, and as shaped by writer-director Paul Morrissey, this latest Dracula is a positive disgrace to an ancient ignoble line. He is constantly whining, pouting, screeching and complaining about his diet. /He is a "martyr to indigestion"/ . . . He flouts the most basic of rules for vampirish good health /he appears in daylight/ . . . The blood-stained episodes of the new film

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REVIEW EXTRACTS (FILMS) (Continued) --

aren't quite as ghoulishly extravagant as the laboratory horrors of Andy Warhol's Frankenstein, but there's a finale . . . that's grisly enough to please the most exacting aficionado. . . Many bits and pieces are funny because they are so utterly terrible, so monumentally ludicrous, but how many of these have been campily and cannily planned? How many are the result of inadvertence, inattention, or sheer ineptitude? . . . There are moments in Andy Warhol's Dracula so abysmally tasteless that I wouldn't hold still for them in any other context; I'd be decrying them to the high hills. But when you see them in this context you simply groan and wait for a jollier example of depravity, for another mind-boggling non sequitur."

A Boy and His Dog (Prod. Alvy Moore & L.Q. Jones; Dir. Jones; adapted from Harlan Ellison's story of same name) -- (WASH. POST 14/7/75; Gary Arnold, reviewer): ". . . shoddy, peurile science-fiction parable . . . A condescending old brute with an electronic brain and a jealous disposition, [the dog] Blood is like Francis the Talking Mule crossed with Hal the Computer. . . About 75 per cent of the film takes place in near or semi-darkness, so it may be irrelevant to discuss the content. The material seems hopelessly shallow, but since so much of the action appears to happen in the dark anyway, there's little reason to get wrapped up in the material at all. . . mistakes juvenile facetiousness for wit and glorifies a juvenile concept of freedom, which means making it in the wild, away from such unmanly encumbrances as civilization and girls. . ."; WASH. STAR 14/7/75; Donia Mills, reviewer): ". . . [underlighting] makes everything on the screen look like it was photographed in a dark forest on a moonless night, and it's usually the result of either an extremely low budget or a director's misguided efforts to use the medium as the message in conveying a dim view of the world. In this case, one suspects a little of both. ## Ah, but who's complaining? There's nothing much in A Boy and His Dog that's worth seeing anyhow. . . if Ellison had any new twists [on his stale theme] Jones certainly hasn't picked up on them. The movie merely plays around at being bizarre, littered with concepts and systems half-explained or not elaborated on at all. ## The only notion that comes through loud and clear . . . is that the canine has evolved into the more intelligent and civilized of the pair, and the movie's few amusing moments are the dog's condescending inner reflections . . . on the disgusting state of mankind. Since the pooch has considerably more charisma than his master to begin with, he's the one you tend to identify with all the way."

Young Frankenstein (Dir. Mel Brooks; w/Gene Wilder, Marty Feldman, Peter Boyle, Gene Hackman, Madeline Kahn, Kenneth Mars) -- (WASH. STAR-NEWS 23/12/74; Bob Menaker, reviewer): ". . . a serious homage to those old 'B' horror films of the '30s and '40s that Universal and Monogram used to churn out. . . [one] of the most inventive comedies to come out of Hollywood."; WASH. POST 21/12/74; Gary Arnold, reviewer): ". . . reveals a director whose visual imagination and technical resources remain pretty elementary . . . [who] can't seem to think past a single gag or punch line. . . His only system or organization is One Wheeze After Another. The choppy continuity and static situations wouldn't be so bad if the wheezes were still fresh, but Brooks has worked them into the poorhouse. . ."; (THE BOSTON GLOBE 20/3/75; thanx to David McGirr): "A delirious send-up of James Whale's 1931 original horror opus, with fine, atmospheric photography and imposing gothic scenery. . . but the farce has awkward as well as inspired moments."

Abby (w/William Marshall, Terry Carter, Carol Speed; WASH. POST 8/1/75; reviewed by Angela Brown-Terrell) -- "Imitation may be the sheerest form of flattery, but it sure plays havoc on the moviegoer who sits through Abby, a black film about an exorcist and devil possession a la William Peter Blatty's shocker, The Exorcist. . . Abby . . . is a cheap copy of the original--from script to set to special effects. . . [and it] joins the growing list of blaxploitation films."

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PAIRED REVIEW: The Land That Time Forgot (Dir. Kevin Connor; w/Doug McClure).

Reviewer, Jim Goldfrank:

"This is the first movie that I have ever seen that I got absolutely nothing out of."--Catherine Goldfrank, age 12. There speaks an honest critic about a movie without a plot, with no acting--in fact, with nothing but gorgeous visual effects, and violence, violence, violence. The latter does not contribute to the film, except to keep it from being dull. Here is a violent resumé: The Germans torpedo an English merchant ship. An American (the hero), his English fiancée, and the crew are cast adrift. They board the German U-boat as it surfaces, and take over with bops on the head, rights to the jaw, and some shooting. They later torpedo the German supply ship. They find themselves on Burroughs' lost continent in the Antarctic, refining oil for fuel to get away again. Assorted dinosaurs maul each other, chomp the humans, and are killed by rifle fire. Ape men zonk humans and vice versa. A pterodactyl carries off a friendly ape man, leaving the hero to mourn. (Giving credit where credit is due, the monster scenes are terrific.) The U-boat attempts to maroon hero and fiancée, but is destroyed by volcanic action. (The volcanic scenes are the second and last worthwhile thing. Flames, lava, and fireballs are beautifully done in color.) Hero and heroine remain to cast a message into the sea. That leaves the story open for, Ghod forbid, sequels.

The movie has relatively little to do with the ERB novel except (1) There is a lost continent; (2) Creatures evolve (remember "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"?) after birth rather than before. (Unfortunately, the film makers touch the subject many times, but do not really use it as a plot element.) Verb Sap recommends this movie only to fans of monsters and fireballs. All others should catch it on TV in a few years, but only then if theirs is a color set.

Reviewer, Martin Morse Wooster:

I disagree with Jim Goldfrank about The Land That Time Forgot. It's one of the best dinosaur movies I've ever seen. True, the acting might be bad, but by Ghod, there are actors in it ant not high-school drama dropouts, as is seemingly the case with movies of this type. The film sticks to the plot of the book; if anyone wishes to compare the two, the SF Book Club has a nice edition of the complete novel for \$2.98. The only changes the writers of the screenplay made were to alter the way the U-33 escaped from Caspak (in the book, von Schoenvorts, the captain of the submarine before Bowen Tyler captured it, escapes with his crew out of sheer meanness; I'm not going to tell you how the movie ends, but in it, von Schoenvorts is more noble and heroic than he was in the book); and von Schoenvorts, rather than Tyler, tells of the origins and biology of Caspak. The special effects are outstanding, and the movie's photographer has an excellent sense of color. The screenplay is by Michael Moorcock (in part), and he manages to avoid most of the asinine clichés of dinosaur flicks. ("Look, Ma, those are dinosaurs!" "Yes, Son, they've probably been here for millions of years--since the dawn of mankind!") As much as one tries, one can't laugh at this film. Book by Edgar Rice Burroughs, screenplay by Moorcock--how can the combination miss? I urge you to see this movie--and take your kids, too. You'll all have a good time.

Review Extracts: WASH. STAR 18/6/75 (Deborah Papier): ". . . a movie to see only as a last resort. . . Devotees of monster movies will be disappointed by the special effects; everyone else will simply be disappointed. . ."; WASH. POST 13/6/75 (Tom Shales): ". . . This British-made lost-world loser is so enervated that even its dinosaurs look drowsy. . . These beasts waddle around the painted jungle like glorified marionettes, heads bobbing without expression, bodies heaving awkwardly, and they fool nobody but the actors in the film. The actors don't fool anybody at all. . . Director Kevin Connor plainly thinks that if you swing a camera around enough, people will think they are seeing an action picture. He is proven wrong. . ."

VIEWS, REVIEWS, & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS

I. FICTION: NOVELS.

23 Classics of Science Fiction; Series Editor: Sam Moskowitz; Hyperion Press, Inc., Westport, CT 06880. /Reviewer, Lester Mayer/

All 23 titles in the Hyperion Press "23 Classics of Science Fiction" series have finally been published. There was something like a six-month wait between the first titles published and the last two, Percy Greg's Across the Zodiac and The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins by Robert Paltock. I understand that Hyperion had a devil of a time locating a copy of the former title in a previous edition--that's how rare it is. They finally were able to borrow a reading copy from some library with the conditional stipulation that they rebind it after use. Anyway, this set, delayed from its scheduled appearance in February, 1974 by the paper shortage, has been eagerly awaited by many people. The story goes that Hyperion completely recovered their printing costs from the large number of advance orders they received.

The purpose of the series, as Sam Moskowitz tells it in his introductory blurb in the very attractive catalogue Hyperion put out to announce this project, is to bring back into print ". . . titles that are either milestone works that influenced the course of later science fiction, or (are) significantly representative of an important author". The series consists of facsimile reproductions of titles that have previously appeared in hardcover or paperback editions. New introductory material by the editor or noted collectors and authorities has been added to most of the books to help place them in their proper historical perspective.

So how well does Hyperion succeed with all of this advance planning? Well, there at least two ways a project of this intended scope can be judged. The first way is by the historical or absolutist viewpoint: are these stories truly milestones and have they been seminal influences in the development of science fiction as a genre? I've been a reader and collector of science fiction for 34 years and I'm very much interested in the history of the field, especially in pre-Gernsback days. So far I've read about 17 of the titles, and I've also read or listened to the opinions of people who are familiar with the remaining titles. In answer to that question, then, I say yes! these are important books (not all to the same degree, of course, but for the most part).

The other basis for judgment has got to be the more popular and practical one: how well do these stories stand up by today's standards, and are they entertaining to read? I think these books have stood the test of time. Several of the titles do tend to bring down the average, but these are more than compensated for by some truly superb choices. At least one of the stories--George Allan England's Darkness and Dawn--has got to rank among the greatest science-adventure epics ever to appear at any time or place, and several of the other titles were mysteriously neglected until revived by Hyperion.

Before beginning the reviews, however, let's consider some vital statistics. All books within the hardcover and paperback editions are uniform in format. Both editions are printed on good bookpaper stock, "designed for years of use", as Dover would say. The clothbound edition comes without dustjackets, unfortunately. Margins on pages are very wide, in apparent contradiction of the paper shortage. Price of the complete set of paperback titles is \$95.55, ranging from \$2.95 for several of the titles to \$5.95 for Darkness and Dawn, with a wide gamut of prices in between. The complete hardcover set goes for \$234.45, from an individual low of \$7.50 to \$13.95 (again, DaD). In general, the price structure is pegged to the

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

thickness of each book. What I do not understand is the reason for the increasing differential in paper-to-hardcover price, extending from \$4.55 (Stapledon's Darkness and Light) to \$8.00 (DaD), when the only additional factor involved is an inch or so of cloth for the spine. Come on, now! Hyperion. However, at these prices many libraries should be able to afford an instant set of very attractive hardcover science fiction classics, while many collectors will make the complete paperback edition their big purchase of the year.

Most of the titles in the series fit into one or more of the following categories: scientific romance, future, Utopian, world catastrophe, and early interplanetary. The books I review in this issue of TWJ can easily maneuver within several of these categories, but all are, to a greater or lesser degree, examples of the Utopian novel.

I. The Utopian Novels.

A Round Trip to the Year 2000, by William Wallace Cook (\$9.50 cloth, \$3.85 paper; xii / 310 pp.).

This is the earliest Utopian entry in this series. It originally appeared as a serial in THE ARGOSY (July-November 1903), and much later (1925) in a paperback edition. How unfortunate for Cook for this delay. As Sam Moskowitz points out in his introduction, Karel Capek's masterpiece, "RUR", appeared in print in 1920 and introduced the word "robot" into the language as a synonym for mechanical men. But Cook's earlier novel of the future had mechanical men, too, which he called "muglugs" and which were essential to the story. This reprinting will help to set the record straight, though I doubt that "muglugs" will ever find its way into our dictionaries.

The story opens on Lumley, a philosopher in the year 1900, who is on the verge of taking his own life because he is being hounded for a crime he did not commit. In true pulp fashion, he is deterred from this path by a scientist who offers him a chance to flee through time in a "time coupe". Lumley travels to the year 2000, and is surprised to find that his arrival has been eagerly anticipated by other travellers from 1900, now haplessly stranded in a less-than-perfect "Utopian" society. An even less pleasant surprise to Lumley is that he has been pursued through time by detective Finch, a rule-book type who is determined to make him pay for the crimes with which he is charged. Lumley also discovers that his coming has been looked forward to with what amounts to veneration by the members of this future society because of the philosophies he expressed in a book he once authored. These have provided the guiding theories which were implemented to free people from most laboring requirements. They are served by "muglugs", which are seven-foot metal...er...robots. However, a hardcore faction of the laboring populace, now unneeded and unwanted, feel that Lumley's pioneering efforts have proved a curse rather than a blessing. A new Head Center, who controls the actions of the muglugs by thought-transmittance, is sympathetic to the needs of the displaced workers. He causes the muglugs to revolt and destroy with abandon. Public adulation of Lumley now turns to hatred, and he becomes the object of a revenge-seeking mob. Aided by detective Finch, who in the meantime has stumbled onto proof of Lumley's innocence of any crime, the time-travellers flee back to 1900. However, some remain stranded in 2000 because of the breakdown of the "time coupe". But that's another story, taken up in Castaways of the Year 2000 (ARGOSY, October 1912-February 1913).

A Round Trip to the Year 2000 is loaded with ideas and gimmicks: time-travel by both machine and suspended animation, mechanical men, air piracy, a science-

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

fictional detective, thought-transmission and thought-control, weather regulation, "canned" artificial sunlight and air-conditioning, a tunnel through the center of the earth, electric guns, artificial feeding through absorption of food vapors, female dominance in the art of courtship, and the concept of an air trust which maintains a literal strangle hold on the people by doling out air for money. All of these concepts are utilized in a manner which keeps the plot flowing smoothly, rather than distracting from it. But can you imagine the mind-boggling impact this story must have had on THE ARGOSY readers in 1903, 23 years before Gernsback founded AMAZING STORIES, and science fiction as a genre was under way? In fact, if this novel hadn't been written until the twenties, it would have fitted in very well in AMAZING STORIES or AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY; it's that kind of a story. It can still be read today with enjoyment.

While on the subject of Gernsback, on page 165 a character observes about Lumley, who has just finished recalling his adventures with air pirates and a missile-style vehicle which hurled him through space, that: "such a story would brand you as a second Munchausen". What do you conjecture from this, Sam Moskowitz: did Gernsback derive the idea for his Baron Munchausen stories from this single line in the Cook novel? It's possible, because the first of Gernsback's Munchausen adventures didn't appear until 1915 (in ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENTER), and surely Gernsback was familiar with the science fiction in THE ARGOSY by this time.

The Messiah of the Cylinder, by Victor Rousseau (\$9.50 cloth, \$3.85 paper; xiv + 319 pp.).

This has many points in common with A Round Trip to the Year 2000. In synopsis, the two sound almost like the same story before Messiah takes off on its own tangent. But there are differences which elevate Messiah to the masterpiece level. Unfortunately and mysteriously, it was a forgotten masterpiece until reprinted in this Hyperion edition. It must have created a stir in its time: the editor for EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE (where it originally appeared as a four-part serial, June-September 1917, in slightly condensed form) compared it favorably to Wells' When the Sleeper Wakes, that earlier novel of a Dystopian future. This is high praise indeed, but definitely merited. In plotting, characterization and stylization, Rousseau in Messiah was well ahead of most pulp writers of his day.

Victor Rousseau Emanuel, to give him his full recognition, was one of the most popular authors of fantastic literature to appear in the Munsey magazines, with novels such as The Draft of Eternity, The Sea Demons and The Eye of Balamok, all around the time of Messiah. In 1930 he gravitated to ASTOUNDING STORIES and then STRANGE TALES, with a handful of forgettable stories. His last appearances in the science fiction magazines were in 1941 with a couple of new shorts; then in FANTASTIC NOVELS in 1949 with The Eye of Balamok; and finally in A. MERRITT'S FANTASY MAGAZINE in 1950 with another reprint short. That's it. For all practical purposes, Rousseau has been forgotten by all but an older generation of readers and a handful of pulp collectors.

Not having read all of the above, I'm unable to say if Messiah is representative of Rousseau at his best or if it was a once-in-a-lifetime fluke. The story begins in the years shortly before the outbreak of World War I. Arnold Pennell, biologist in a privately endowed foundation, is associated with fellow scientist Lazaroff in a program for testing the effects of suspended animation on living animal tissue. Lazaroff is a brilliant materialist who looks forward to a world freed of spiritual guidance and humanitarianism. They are also in love with the same girl, Esther, the daughter of their chief. Following an argument with his chief because of their differing ideologies, and his almost-simultaneous rejection by Esther, Lazaroff tricks Arnold into entering a vacuum cylinder set for a hundred

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

years in the future. When Arnold escapes from the cylinder, he is weak and bewildered. He finds his way to London, now a strange and alien city of the future, where he is befriended by David, the keeper of the Strangers' House. David explains that most of the world is governed by scientific precepts, religious faith is officially dead, and a Federation of Nations is ruled by two men--Boss Lembkin and Doctor Sanson. David confides to Arnold that the people are tired of this regimented "utopia", and they are looking forward to the coming of a Messiah who will give back to them their ancient liberties. The legend also concerns a sleeping temple goddess who is destined to be awakened by the Messiah and mated to him.

Arnold is heralded by the people as the Messiah, and he is overjoyed/horrified to discover that the sleeping goddess is his Esther, also cast into the future by Lazaroff. Arnold finds himself involved in a power struggle between Boss Lembkin and Doctor Sanson, the latter revealed as Lazaroff! He has himself made the trip into the future, arranging to awaken years before Arnold, giving him time to implement his political theories. This has resulted in an England which is gripped by a tyrannous and perverted form of socialism which denies the people either religion or freedom. Sensing a revolutionary mood and recognizing that Arnold as Messiah is the catalyst that can start things off, Lazaroff/Sanson plans to gain the support of the masses in the coming conflict between Boss Lembkin, the revolutionaries and himself by offering them the gift of immortality. The unexpected happens: the people prefer to return to the old ways, and spurn Lazaroff's offer of bodily immortality for the hope of heavenly salvation. This culminates in a revolution which involves not only the principals, but also the forces of the Russians and the American Mormons! The novel closes on the vision of a bright future with a new government trying to steer a course between "the corruption of Social Democracy and the tyranny of Social Autocracy".

But don't let all this talk of revolutions and corrupt governments scare you away. Messiah is an excellent story, and one of the finest examples of early political science fiction I have ever read. (Lester del Rey thinks so, too, and he makes his points loud and clear in his excellent introduction to this edition.) Rousseau's emphasis was on storytelling, and he knew how to keep things moving. Messiah never bogs down into a political essay. (Well, that's not quite true; the last short chapter is mostly classical in scope. Rousseau defines his ideal society, which has zilch appeal for me. I would almost advise skipping it, except that it comes too late to do much harm....)

I can't leave Messiah without commenting about the illustrations by Joseph Clement Coll. The eleven full- and double-page illustrations are all reprinted from the magazine installments, although there are some other illustrations which never appeared any place but in the magazine version of Messiah (see inside back cover of July 1974 issue of XENOPHILE, a relatively new tradezine). Coll was one of several excellent illustrators EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE used during this period, and he was the one they turned to most frequently for depicting scenes from fantastic stories. He didn't have the same style as Finlay, but he did have his power of imagination. I still recall with fondness his tinted illustrations for Talbot Mundy's Full Moon, also serialized in EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE. I aure hope that Coll is represented in at least one of the histories of science fiction illustrating that is scheduled for the near future. He had too great a talent to be neglected.

Underground Man, by Gabriel de Tarde (\$7.50 cloth, \$2.95 paper; vii + 198 pp.).

The third novel in the Utopian vein, and the one which adheres closest to the classical mold, was originally published in English in 1905, and is still of interest today because it was one of the earliest works to popularize the concept

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of an advanced future Earth civilization living underground. However, that interest will probably be greater for science fiction collectors, students and historians than for the casual reader. Like most stories of utopias, there are no central characters with whom to identify, and the story-line is heavily chronicled.

Underground Man doesn't sound too bad in summary. Following a period of frightful wars, mankind has united to form a socialist utopia on Earth. But at the end of the 25th century, the sun has begun to expire. Faced with eventual extinction from encroaching glaciers, the remnants of mankind go underground to survive. Vast engineering feats are accomplished in penetrating the bowels of the earth; cities are carved out of subterranean grottos. Far from a life of privation, however, the survivors find themselves in a virtual utopia: there are no vagaries of weather to plague them; the extremes of temperature (from the heat of underground volcanos and cold from the glaciers) provide them with unlimited power; and food supplies exist in abundance in the ultimate in deep freezers, the overhead glaciers. A minimum of utilitarian work is asked of the citizen; an aesthetic life is his for the taking! An artistic community is created and mankind is able to devote itself to the pursuit of ultimate truth. But by story's end, there is discord in paradise: morals are relaxing; there is a disquieting growth in population, threatening the stability of the community; and there is a corresponding drop in artistic achievements. Tarde sums it all up with a plea to mankind to pursue the happy course of its destiny under the unique conditions of absolute independence and purity that are possible in these communities in the bowels of the earth.

As utopias go, the story-line for Underground Man is almost exciting in spots, but the execution is dull, dull, dull! It is conceivable that if it had been given a first-rate novelized treatment, it would today be a popular classic, rather than one which was forgotten until this reprinting. Consider this, for example: H.G. Wells contributes an introduction in which he says that Tarde was well advised to resist dramatizing the effects of a solar extinction on a terrified and helpless populace, and then H.G. himself postulates what dramatic form this conception might have taken. His two-page episode packs more punch than Tarde manages in the rest of the book. Underground Man by H.G. Wells--what a story that would have been!

As I said, only for scholars and collectors.

City of Endless Night, by Milo Hastings (\$9.95 cloth, \$3.95 paper; v / 346 pp.).

In lieu of that unwritten Wells masterpiece, Hyperion offers us another story of an underground civilization. Hastings' "City of Endless Night" is an underground city-state of three hundred-million inhabitants, with only an armored dome poking above the surface. This long novel is richly detailed in its description of the technical marvels which have built and sustained this multi-leveled subterranean haven for the population of a future Berlin, stalemated in war with a free-world confederation. It bears the stamp of realism, whereas the credibility of Tarde's creation is as wispy as pipesmoke.

City of Endless Night has a most unusual beginning. The Hyperion printing is a reprint of the Dodd, Mead edition which appeared in 1920. A slightly shorter version under the original title, Children of "Kultur", first saw light the year before in serial form in the inaugural issue of--you won't believe this!--TRUE STORY MAGAZINE. The first editorial neatly stated that the new magazine would publish stories that depicted actual experiences of life, but that "... Our only deviation from the rule we have laid down will be in stories of the future". As if to emphasize this point, there was a second science fiction serial in that

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issue. Weird and Wonderful Story of Another World, by Tyman Currio, takes place on the planet Jupiter. This story, however, was a reprint, albeit in quite different form, from 1905-1906 issues of PHYSICAL CULTURE MAGAZINE. Both magazines were published by Bernarr Macfadden. Strangely enough, its first time around the Currio story was presented as a true story, and was given this endorsement by Macfadden: ". . . I consider this story to be the most unique, the most interesting and--best of all--the most instructive of all the serials that have so far been published in this magazine and as providing the possibilities of physical culture in the mental and physical advancement of man on this or our sister planets." The "true story" angle was not attempted with the revised version, despite its appearance in TRUE STORY MAGAZINE. Shaver, are you listening?

Truly, science fiction has roots that go deep and sometimes in very odd directions!

Back to City of Endless Night: The story opens in 2051. A young chemical engineer from outside accidentally locates a tunnel leading into Berlin. Unable to escape the same way he entered, he assumes the identity of a dead engineer he finds in the tunnels, and allows himself to be indoctrinated into life in the city. He finds that he is a member of a rigorously class-disciplined society. The citizen is born and bred to satisfy a particular function in life--i.e., as a member of the soldiering class, worker, or scientist, etc. Scientific breeding is carried to the ultimate in the case of the worker, who has only two interests in life: to produce and to achieve to paternity. The latter "objective" is offered almost as a sop to the workers. The women are greatly outnumbered by the men and generally segregated from them, except for the lucky ones who can afford to pay for their pleasures. There is an arbitocratic ruling class and, over all, a German emperor descended from the House of Hohenzollern. History and even religion have been rewritten to suit the needs of the emperor. A "new Bible" eliminates the idea of Heaven as a reward, but retains the concept of Hell as punishment. This is to provide a deterrent to suicides, especially among the children of the state, and to instill obedience among the citizens.

In a scene that is reminiscent of Lew Ayres' confrontation with the brain-washed, almost puppet-like German students in All Quiet on the Western Front, the engineer is appalled when he visits a class of German youths to discover that whatever humanitarian virtues they may have are being stifled and replaced by exaggerated inhuman emotions. The man from outside vows to see that this ugly blot of a city is removed from the face of the earth. He is especially resolute after the emperor promises his people that the day is near when they will leave their hideaway to conquer and subdue the "mongrel" hordes who now inhabit the surface of the earth. The engineer carefully cultivates the friendship and confidence of dissidents among the city's population who are sick of the German "paradise" and would change it. In the meantime, he achieves a measure of importance by perfecting a technique essential to the production of synthetic protein, thus relieving a problem that is constantly threatening the underground dwellers. However, suspicion arises as to his real identity, and, with the help of his friends, he escapes from Berlin through an undersea tunnel. Through his guidance and knowledge of Berlin, the outside World Armies are able to conquer Berlin and restore peace to the world.

Viewed up close, there are no good reasons to believe that the type of culture Hastings postulates couldn't happen. Aside from the unique environment, City of Endless Night is antecedent to the era of Nazi Germany, as Sam points out in his fascinating and fact-filled introduction to this edition. Hastings tells his story in a thoroughly convincing fashion, even to the point of interweaving a

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tender love story which does not detract from the seriousness of the subject or slow down the narrative pace. Definitely recommended.

The Absolute at Large, by Karel Capek (\$8.50 cloth, \$3.50 paper; xiii / 242 pp.).

It can be argued that this novel belongs to the category of Utopian literature--which is why I'm discussing it here. Depending on your beliefs, it can also be argued that it is more fantasy than science fiction, or even that it is primarily a satire in science-fictional trappings. J.O. Bailey puts it under the heading of "Wonderful Events" in company with Philip Wylie's The Gladiator, Wells' The Food of the Gods, Stapledon's Odd John and Sirius, England's The Golden Blight, and R.C. Sheriff's The Hopkins Manuscript (a dreary novel about the moon falling into the earth and how a "commonplace Englishman" faces disaster). In his introduction to the Hyperion edition, William E. Harkins, author of the first full-length study of Capek in English, says that the choice of form in The Absolute at Large derives from the age-old satirical, "utopian" literary tradition that has roots back to Voltaire's Candide. 333, A Bibliography of the Science-Fantasy Novel designates it as belonging to that division of science-fantasy they label "Unknown Worlds", after the cherished magazine of that title, along with novels by Pratt and de Camp and company. All of which makes for strange bedfellows indeed.

The basic premise of The Absolute at Large is that God--The Absolute--is present in all of nature's forms, and that when the power of the atom is harnessed there is an accompanying release of "religious" energy. This all comes about with the invention of a machine called the Karburator, which seems to run forever on a small amount of fuel, at the same time producing limitless energy by splitting the atom. God, The Absolute, is released and makes His presence felt. Persons within range of a Karburator "get religion" and acquire the capability to prophesy and perform miracles. The Karburator is mass-produced despite the opposition of organized religion, which believes that mankind cannot stand a real and active God. In the ensuing wave of religious fanaticism that sweeps over the world businessmen give away their wealth to the poor. The Absolute craves work and flings Itself into manufacturing with such zeal that there is uncontrolled overproduction; manufactured goods flood the streets. The distribution system breaks down and shortages crop up everywhere. Economic chaos threatens, nationilistic feelings intensify, and eventually war breaks out when the world powers cannot reach an agreement on what common line of conduct they should take with regard to God. Karburators everywhere belonging to the enemy are destroyed; gone also is the vision of "utopia" that seemed so close at hand. A 10-year World War ensues which is so destructive that civilization is brought to the brink of collapse. The Last Battle of The Greatest War ends with a whimper, but with the hint that things may return to normal.

Don't let the foregoing summary fool you: the treatment of this theme by Capek is light, lively and ironic, but dated by subsequent events. Readers who go for satires should enjoy this one. Unfortunately for me, I never felt that interested or involved. Perhaps this is because there was no one, strong centralized character with whom to identify. I feel cheated somehow, as if I should have enjoyed it more. It doesn't inspire me to go on to the other of Capek's stories, with the possible exception of "R.U.R."

My next reviews of the Hyperion books will deal with that vanished species, the "scientific romance". ((This should appear in TWJ #87, following the special Will F. Jenkins/Ihurray Leinster Memorial Issue (#86). --ed.))

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And the Burroughs Tradition Carries On.... [by Jim Goldfrank]

Take a planet with an assortment of human and non-human races. Conveniently they all speak the same language, even though separate countries have colorful and wildly varying cultures. There is generally a low level of technology. The only motorized vehicle is an occasional "flier", and no automobiles or even steam boats exist. Weapons technology does not include firearms, although Burroughs does mention "radium rifles". "Real men", like the Earthman hero, fight with weapons designed to cut, hack, stab, or skewer. He usually marries a princess or some noble woman, somewhere in the series of novels, and has offspring, but no great place in the narrative is devoted to the begetting thereof. He journeys across the planet, as in Burroughs' Mars, Venus, or Pellucidar series. ("Pellucidar, as every schoolboy knows", is the hollow world inside the earth. It may be considered another planet for plot purposes.) In fact, the hero moves on elsewhere every time the plot begins to thin out.

Burroughs makes a contract with the reader that we call suspension of disbelief. The reader is not to worry about unlikelihoods like the mammalian Dejah Thoris laying her first egg, or how John Carter and his princess were able to have offspring at all, being presumably of different species. The reader is not to worry about lionlike creatures with no herbivores on which to prey. In return, Burroughs promises to provide the reader with a thumping good adventure yarn. In proof that this is all for fun, Burroughs occasionally spoofs his own writing. A Martian mad scientist has converted his body to a rubberlike material, thus gaining immortality. The skeptic John Carter lops off the scientist's head. "I am immortal" said the scientist's head, bouncing up and down on the floor. Nor was there satire missing: in the Venus series, the Zani (an anagram) followers of Mephis the dictator shout "Maltu Mephis" while engaging in a ridiculous parody of the goose-step. Finally, chess-like games have their place. Like "Jetan" in Chessmen of Mars, the Scorpio series has a game. The expression "Rank your del-dars" means "set up your pieces" or "put your cards on the table". Goreans play The Game, or Kaissa, which is very close to chess, although names of pieces and their moves vary from culture to culture.

This is the recipe for a Burroughs-tradition novel. The idea continues to hit paydirt at the bookstands to this day. Albert Burt Akers' (a pen name) novel #8 in the Dray Prescott-Scorpio series is Fliers of Antares. John Norman is up to #9 with Marauders of Gor. Lin Carter has reached #5 with Mind Wizards of Calisto. How do these novels stack up against previous novels of the same series, against each other, and against the Burroughs tradition?

Fliers of Antares, by Alan Burt Akers (DAW; pb; .1.25).

This one is really as bad as Don D'Ammassa thinks the rest of the series was. The series started off with rich inventiveness: planet Kregen has two suns, an assortment of moons, 19 races of humanoids as of the fifth book (there are more by now, which tries the limits of suspension of disbelief), all sorts of riding and flying animals, and a few monsters. The language is rich: a man hears "the bells of Beng-Kishi" as he is being knocked unconscious, and swears "by the diseased left armpit" and other less mentionable parts of Makki-Grodno. He condemns his foes to "the Ice Floes of Sicce", a Kregenian version of Hell. The series reached a climax with Prince of Scorpio, in which the Earthman hero finally won his princess, and has been going downhill ever since. There is a stock set of situations: Hero Dray Prescott may be a prince, a slave, fight single-handedly against injustice (usually slavery), or lead an army to battle. The

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variety of language is rich in insults: Prescott calls himself, or someone else, or is called an onker (jackass), a hairy graint, a nurdling, or a nursh. Stock characters include the Princess, the silly girl, the evil queen, the loyal warrior friend, the slaver, and plenty of cannon (or axe or sword) fodder. By novel #8, the author chooses one element from each list and makes an episode of it. The recombination of stock elements has replaced creativity, and the whole thing is getting a bit tedious. This writer once figured that from the time of Prescott's birth in the 1700's to the present, and assuming five elapsed years per novel, this series might continue on for $19\frac{1}{2}$ novels. However a new element has been seen in several of these--the time loop. In Fliers, the "Star Lords" have thrown Prescott back into the past, where he has 10 years of adventures before rejoining his princess minutes after leaving her. Prescott is a mine slave, a warrior, a general, and finally a king. There is really nothing new about Fliers. If we are lucky, Akers will send Prescott off to the "Ice Floes of Sicce", and search for another character. Else, with all those time loops, the series could go on forever!

Marauders of Gor, by John Norman (DAW; pb; \$1.50).

Gor is counter-Earth, 180° opposite Earth in its orbit so we don't know it exists--and never mind that no astronomer has noticed perturbations in the orbits of other solar planets! Gor's human populations have been brought from Earth in flying saucers. There are Roman warriors with Roman names, Amazons called "Panther Girls", nomads with Mongol names, seafaring nations, and now vikings. The trade in slaves continues. In Captive of Gor Norman used the Burroughs plot device of carrying the series on with another lead character. We follow a spoiled woman from her capture on Earth through a series of captivities. She matures as a Gorean woman, glorying in her submission. Gor is atypical of the Burroughs tradition in that everything revolves about sex. It is a rather sick kind of sex that involves a woman submitting to the man that uses her. It involves degradation--whipping and chaining are very much a part of the scene. A true Gorean woman reaches glorious fulfillment in lying there and panting deliciously while a man does his thing. She might as well enjoy it if she can--she hasn't any choice in the matter. The back cover of Marauders announces that the author has written a book called Imaginative Sex. Gorean sex has not been very imaginative so far, so Ghod alone knows what is in that book (making it, while flying through the skies on the back of a Gorean riding bird, maybe). Incidentally, there is so much use of women that one wonders why Gor does not have a population explosion. No woman ever becomes pregnant in the series, and children seldom if ever appear. Now the answer: in Marauders, Norman belatedly introduces a "slave wine" whose contraceptive effects last for a month.

Now we come to the matter of suspension of disbelief. In the Scorpio series, there are so many improbabilities that we know the author's admonition to the reader is to suspend disbelief and have a good time. Gor is not Burroughs tradition in this regard. Norman takes Gor seriously and expects the reader to do so. Humor and satire are missing. Norman describes food, dress, weaponry, buildings, etc. down to a minutely detailed level as if to convince himself and us of its reality. The minute detail interferes with the plot. Suspension of disbelief is not requested. The improbabilities betray the author and break the contract of "I'll make it realistic; you believe." Despite superfluity of detail and too much introspection on manners, morals, and why women enjoy being used, the series has had two high points: Assassin of Gor carries great excitement in its description of bird races. Nomads of Gor recreates brilliantly the life of Mongol-type people.

In Marauders of Gor, hero Tarl Cabot spends a time in the North of Gor with a race of vikings. After about 200 pages of philosophy and pseudoporn, the author gets down to the action sequences that make his books worth reading despite their

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being 2/3 trash. He meets the Kur, intelligent carnivores who consider human beings good food. They own the flying saucers that do the slaving. Most of their ships stay beyond the orbit of Mars, hoping to take over both Earth and Gor, and eat their inhabitants. They are frustrated by Gor's Priest Kings, benevolent, super-intelligent, seldom-seen, gigantic insects. There follows exciting battle action between the vikings and on-planet Kur, who are limited to local weapons. After the defeat of the Kur, the author ties up some unresolved plot threads, and expounds more sex-oriented, Nietzschean-sounding philosophy. Someone asked the reviewer, "If these things are so rotten, why do you keep on buying them?" The answer lies in the unevenness of the writing--some of it is brilliant. We keep hoping that the next Gor novel will be a good one.

Mind Wizards of Callisto, by Lin Carter (Dell; pb; 95¢).

The Callisto series is the least pretentious of the three. It has the best-quality writing, and is truest to the Burroughs tradition. It lacks Scorpio's outpouring of thinly sketched detail, and Gor's preoccupation with minute details. It keeps the plot down to relatively few characters and races, and thus focuses closely on the point the author has to make. Put it this way: On Kregen of Scorpio we see lots of forest. On Gor we see lots of trees, and lose the forest. On Callisto, a happy balance is struck.

Lin Carter mixes suspension of disbelief concepts with very plausible ones. Unexplainable is the fact that a moon of Jupiter is composed of both plain woods and tropical jungle, or that it should have periods of light, whose source is neither our sun nor reflected light from Jupiter, and darkness. Here we are willing to suspend our disbelief for a fine tale. Even Jonathan Dark, "Jandar of Callisto", takes his surroundings with a grain of salt, but concludes that although unexplainable, they are nonetheless real. The author uses inventive hardware, and inventively uses logical concepts. There are winged sky sailing vessels. Unbelievable? Carter doesn't strain our belief that far; they are lighter-than-air with a mysterious gas providing the lift, and built of reinforced paper. In Mad Empress of Callisto, the lady in question has had visions from the "Lords of Gordrinator", or Jupiter, who are Callistan deities. They tell her to conquer her world. Jandar persuades her that the Lords have little to do with human affairs; it is far more likely that a man of proven projective hypnotic powers, a "Mind Wizard", has influenced her. She should choose the simplest explanation, says Jandar, in a clear explanation of Occam's Razor.

Carter mixes this inventiveness with clear visual description and humor. There is a plant that uproots itself and shuffles along in search of water. When it finds the water, it re-roots. Its leaves are water-filled bladders and also edible. It leads the hungry and thirsty party of Jandar a merry chase until they corral the frightened little plant to strip it for food and drink. The episode is worth a chuckle.

Some good character studies crop up, usually in minor characters: Lukor, a gallant swordmaster with a sense of romantic adventure; a little thief who alternately snivels and boasts, who turns out to be a master spy; a stuffy geographer.

Callistans hardly think why one hemisphere is unknown to them, or why they hardly think of its existence. It seems that the Mind Wizards want it that way, protecting their own, while raising Cain on the rest of the planet (which is in fact a moon of Jupiter). In Mind Wizards, Jandar has formed a league of Callisto's great cities. These have outfitted an aerial armada to carry the battle to the Mind Wizards. Jandar's ship is attacked by man-eating bird-men. Jandar and a

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young man are carried off. Several comrades decide to search for them. One ship of the armada is detailed to search for all of these lost men while the rest of the armada searches for the city of the Mind Wizards. The sage Zastro is the only Callistan with a command of the English language. He continues Jandar's manuscripts, telling of the fruitless search for Jandar by the one ship, as well as the failure of the rest of the armada to rendezvous. Tune in on the next novel, folks, to see what happens next.

Recommendation to the reader: The Scorpio series is pretty readable in the first through the fifth books, and goes downhill from there. The Gor novels are uneven; the writing varies from book to book, and even in the same book. If you can stomach wading through oceans of trash to reach the good writing, Gor is worthwhile. Callisto consistently offers cleanly written prose, good characterization, humor, and light-hearted adventure. It is the best of the lot for your money if you love the Burroughs tradition.

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Ice and Iron, by Wilson Tucker (Doubleday & Co., Inc.; \$4.95; also SFBC edition).
/Reviewer, Chick Derry/

The dust jacket tells us that this is Bob Tucker's 21st book. But this piece of information isn't necessary--anyone who has read any of Bob's previous books will appreciate the growth of his ability.

Unlike many science fiction writers, Tucker has never been flashy. He has always written warm, human stories, using a restricted viewpoint. Although he has implied vast, cosmic significances in several of his books, his story is always the immediate, the personal, the here-and-now situation.

He is not an innovator of concepts. He has no new truths to lay before us. Rather, his facility lies in taking the hoary chestnut and exploring it more fully, illustrating the minutiae of detail glossed over by the "world savers".

In The Long Loud Silence we had the world-destroying war and the wandering, self-sufficient survivors. Year of the Quiet Sun dealt with the implications of tampering with history through time-travel.

In Ice and Iron Tucker hauls out, for our inspection, the coming ice age, and elevates Charles Fort to the status of historian. As a kind of throwaway, there is the device from the future that will become the prototype of the device itself. With these time-honored ingredients, he blends a very real, believable story.

His characters are few and his time-span only a matter of days. Through the eyes of a "recon" (archaeological-reconstructionist), Fisher Yann High Smith (love that name!); a doctor who knits, and was once wealthy and owned a horse; a poly-lib, or walking librarian whose mind is her reference books; and a few supporting individuals, he draws a picture eons in scope.

You get a view of humanity squeezed into an area beginning at the Canadian border and extending to the tropics. Everything north of this is under the moving glacier. You know that within the lifetime of this handful of scientists stationed here to chart the changing environment, the glacier will cover half the United States. By implication the ice cap covers the rest of the world to the same extent.

Into this very real world of cold and depression is introduced a strange and frightening concept. Somewhere up in the future a war is being fought--and the losers are tumbling (literally) into the "now".

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By careful delineation of character and through extrapolation, we finally understand both the sense of futility of life in the shadow of the glacier, and the logical evolution that brought about the war in the future.

Following the style of The Year of the Quiet Sun, Ice and Iron is an understated story. Its quiet, almost casual appearance lends great strength and conviction to the premise.

Ice and Iron is good, believable science fiction. It is also a good, real story, that is well-written.

* * * * *

Capsule Reviews:

Reviewer, Stan Burns:

Rendezvous with Rama, by Arthur C. Clarke (Ballantine #24175; '73/4; \$1.75).

Paperback version of last year's Hugo-Nebula winner. The novel contains a few corny passages (hot-tempered Mercurians!!), but is remarkably successful in sustaining a realistic approach to the visit of a huge starship to our solar system. The almost documentary quality of the narrative (garnered from many of the techniques of the Apollo program) creates a completely believable novel. Rather than the old tradition of building a spaceship and sending it to the moon (as in Rocket Ship Galileo), Clarke has his astronauts step off the ship and test the ground in a short "ship walk", then return inside to compare data before proceeding further. I'm not going to talk about Rama, the alien visitor, because literally nothing I could say would even come close to covering it adequately. It is one of the few things I have ever run into to that has to be experienced directly to be fully appreciated. The whole concept is completely mind-boggling. Ballantine has also put an incredible foldout cover on the book which is actually from the novel--which is pretty mind-boggling in itself, when you come to think of it. Highly recommended.

Patron of the Arts, by William Rotsler (Ballantine #24062; '74; \$1.25).

The lengthening of the novelette into this novel takes away some of the impact imparted by the shorter version. Rotsler doesn't handle first-person narrative as well as someone like Gavin Lyall, who is a master at the art--the dialog stumbles over too many "I said"s, and long introspective paragraphs that predictably follow. Still, for a first novel it is quite readable and entertaining--which is all I generally ask in such a case. I imagine that after a little more experience, Rotsler will be turning out some "good" works....

The Hollow Lands, by Michael Moorcock (Harper; '74; \$6.95; also SFBC ed.).

Sequel to An Alien Heat. I found it highly uneven. Parts of it are extremely humorous, others enlightening, some disturbing. But others I found to be repetitive from the previous novel. There's one scene in this one with a robot Nanny, whose control track has become stuck with age, so that she tries to mother the hero. It cracked me up so badly that I fell off the couch. Others were dull, and caused me to skip forward to other parts of the novel. I think the only fair thing to say is that if you liked the previous novel, you will also enjoy this one. If you haven't read Heat, this novel will totally confuse you....

The Weathermonger, by Peter Dickinson (DAW #UQ1112; '68/'74; 95¢)/

Come closer, children, and let Unka Staniel tell you all about this really poor children's fantasy he just read. You see, everything mechanical in England has stopped functioning 'cause somebody laid a curse on all the machines, and

(Cont. next page)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

these two kids--brother and sister--set out across the countryside in this old 1912 Rolls (what's that, you say a Land Rover would be more sensible?) to find out what has caused the curse. They run into all sorts of interesting things on the way, like dumb peasants and bad men who steal their gold, and this great evil castle where a poor, well-meaning fool has sought to revive Merlin (who else?) into the modern world--but he liked things the way they were in the middle ages so he placed a curse on all the machines so nobody would use them and--what's that you say? It sounds stupid? Step to the front of the class.... It does have a nice Barr cover, but is it worth 95¢ just to buy a cover?

The Eater of Worlds, by Gregory Kern (DAW #UQ1113; '74; 95¢; #8 in "Cap Kennedy: Secret Agent of the Spaceways" series).

The writing in this novel, like in the ones that precede it, starts out well but soon degenerates into hopeless melodrama. The pacing at the end is such that it completely destroys any semblance of style (what little there was in the beginning). The dialog is handled better than in the preceding novel, giving credence to the idea that "Kern" is a house name. But the built-in drawback to the novel is mostly the incredibly corny characterization of "Cap's" pals. There's the Engineer Saratov, who cares for nothing but his "engines" (now, where have I heard that before?), and Chemile, the alien who can "blend" in with any surroundings. They just ain't got no class--straight off the back of a cheap cereal package! If "Kern" killed them off the novel would read much better. For anyone under ten, with an IQ to match.

The Second Experiment, by J. O. Jeppson (Houghton-Mifflin; '74; \$6.95).

While I believe the term "space opera" was originally coined from "horse opera", with this novel it can be expanded to include "soap opera". The writing is extremely melodramatic; the dialog abounds with said-bookisms. But worst of all, the author manages to end every chapter with a cliffhanger. It reads more like an old movie serial than a modern SF novel. Even for a juvenile the plot is sophomoric. There's this evil computer, see. And it's out to control the universe (unless the hero can destroy it...but will he escape the clutches of the status-field in time??). The only thing that saves it from being completely dismal is the presence of some dim jewels in an otherwise stinking swamp. Like Ka, a telepathic intelligent green mammoth that bakes cookies for the children of the exiled Earthmen. Or R'ya, a 50-foot tall purple dragon. But as delightful as I found some of the author's creations, the book itself only only manages to drag itself along page-by-slow-page. The pace manages to pick up somewhat in the second and third sections, but even this isn't enough to sustain reader interest (unless he's young enough not to know any better). Buy at your own risk.

"The Clunk List: A compilation of books that may be missed without regret"):

Berserker's Planet, by Fred Saberhagen (DAW #UY1167; '75; \$1.25) -- While I have always been fond of the short stories in this series, I have never been very pleased with the novels. This novel is just too padded for length, with a lot of useless information, some of which is wrong. (Although whether this wrong info is the result of the author or the typesetter at DAW is open to question.) "Total isolation received by both planets" I'm sure should read "total illumination . . ."; and there are other instances. What's a spinar??? A timekiller, and nothing more.

The Deep, by John Crowley (Doubleday; '75; \$5.95) -- Surprisingly, this novel has a decent cover. Unfortunately, that's all it has. The writing is adequate, but the plotting is so confusing--characters being introduced just to be killed off, etc.--that I found it not only impossible to follow but also to finish....

Mimics of Dephene, by Gregory Kern (DAW #UY1168; '75; \$1.25) -- Cap Kennedy #15.

A Place Beyond Man, by Cary Neeper (Scribners; '75; \$7.95) -- Within six pages the author has an alien, newly arrived on Earth, say to a grasshopper: "Hi, pal. Want to go to the moon with me?" I like to read novels where the author made some

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

attempt at constructing logical and interesting backgrounds. This novel (which has got to be a juvenile--no "adult" novel could possibly be so insulting to the reader's intelligence) is pompous, boring, insulting, illogical, and generally a piece of crap. An alien should talk like an alien, not like the village moron....

2018 A.D. Or The King Kong Blues, by Sam J. Lundwall (DAW #UY1161; '75; \$1.25) -- This is supposedly the satire that rocked Sweden last year. Personally, I found that rather than being outrageous, or even funny, this novel was just plain dull. It reads like one of Brunner's recent novels would if he had tried to be cute as well as pompous....

Reviewer, Don D'Amassa:

Showboat World, by Jack Vance (Pyramid Books).

Jack Vance returns to Big Planet for this recent novel. Apollon Zamp is the foppish but shrewdly competent master of a showboat plying its trade among the incredibly disparate communities of oddballs and malcontents that make up the population of Big Planet. His rivalry with another boat captain involves him in a competition before King Waldemar at far Mornune, a competition he is loathe to enter until the arrival of a mysteriously reticent woman intriguer. Although not to be taken too seriously, the novel is a colorful adventure as we follow the roughish activities of the varied cast of characters through the vagaries of assorted villages along the way. Often farcical, almost always funny, Showboat World has a distinct flavor of fantasy rather than SF. Perhaps not as ambitious as some of Vance's recent novels, but highly entertaining throughout.

Red Tide, by D.D. Chapman & Deloris Lehman Tarzan (Ace Books).

This is the first of the new Ace Special line that I've read and, although it isn't up to the quality I expected when Terry Carr was editing the line, it's not anywhere near as bad as I'd feared. An underwater research station is cut off from the world during a nuclear war following a biological attack on the U.S. Survival of the scattered microcosms of humanity becomes the main plot, and a series of adventures ensues. The scenes set aboard the research station are usually convincing, though the characterizations are often sketchy. The scenes elsewhere--including a rather too pat subplot about experiments at human breathing of liquid--are not. A very irregular novel, in sum, that gets too tied up in its own internal problems to really say anything very new or do anything very original with the post-catastrophe society.

The Rats, by James Herbert (Signet Books).

We seem to have entered the year of ecology gone wild. Thomas Page inundates us with beetles in The Hephaestus Plague. Barry Malzberg and Hollywood torment us with ants in Phase IV, bumblebees menace us in Arthur Herzog's The Swarm, and James Herbert has us nibbled to death by rats in this reprint of a British novel. Mutated rats, introduced by a mad zoologist, infest London, attacking humans in broad daylight, breeding rapidly and threatening the entire city. They are ultimately lured into streams of poison gas by an ultrasonic transmitter. (Shades of the Pied Piper!) A. Bertram Chandler did this years ago in The Hamelin Plague. Chandler didn't do a particularly good job; Herbert doesn't do as well. Unless, of course, you're the kind of reader who really relishes delightfully bloody scenes of dismemberment, flapping intestines, and popping eyeballs.

Police Your Planet, by Lester del Rey (Ballantine Books).

This is an early (1953) del Rey novel never previously in paperback, surprising since there are far worse del Rey novels that have seen more than one paperback edition. Marsport has become unbelievably corrupt, with gangs openly assaulting citizens, protection money coerced from shopkeepers by the police force, rigged

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

elections, and the like. A young exile from Earth is unable to suppress his idealism and becomes increasingly involved with the underground machinations of Security, a supra-national organization, which hopes to clean up the criminal element without allowing any of Earth's nations to establish hegemony on Mars. For the most part, this is an excellent novel. It is marred by the repeated stupidity of the hero, who manages to foul things up so often and so thoroughly, it just isn't realistic to believe he could ever have won out in the end. It's a better-than-average adventure story of its period, though, and it should have been reprinted sooner.

Threshold, by Judith Singer (Bantam Books).

The packaging disguises the fact that this is a very strange SF novel with overtones of mysticism. A cyborg astronaut, Frank Rossi, has undergone an inexplicable prescient episode while exploring the asteroid belt. Upon his return to Earth, he finds that he can no longer function as the institutionalized hero of the U.S. and that he is slowly enacting the scenes he foresaw while in space. Complicating matters is the fact that the government agency monitoring his flight also witnessed the prescient scenes, which replaced the normal visual image being broadcast to them. Singer has worked out a complicated but logical near-future evolution of our society against which Rossi tries to work out his own destiny. A very good novel that I might have considered excellent except for my admitted disdain for mysticism.

From the Legend of Biel, by Mary Staton (Ace Books).

This first novel is the second of the new Ace SF specials; it does not bode well for the series. A human exploration starship is sent to investigate a planet upon which geometrical forms of enigmatic nature have been found. Staton employs a trunkload of visual pyrotechnics, altered type faces, double columns, and such-like in an unsuccessful attempt to mask incredibly melodramatic narrative and stilted prose. The dialogue has the excitement and interest of a typical NASA jaunt. The plot, under the cloak of experimental form, is hoary and bedraggled. There are brief scenes and ideas that indicate Staton may have the ability to write good adventure stories, but as a novel, this can only be considered dull.

Swan Song, by Brian M. Stableford (DAW Books).

The sixth, and probably last, adventure of Grainger and the Hooded Swan is studded with the deaths of three of the continuing characters. Stableford has written six excellent space operas, characterized by crisp, rolling prose and some of the best dialogue in recent SF. This particular novel strikes me as plotwise a bit too much repetitive of The Fenris Device, volume five in the series. I suspect Stableford was running into the limitations of his own universe, and is now likely to attempt something else. Whatever it is, I'm looking forward to it.

Malevil, by Robert Merle (Paperback Library).

Robert Merle, author of the fine novel Day of the Dolphin, returns with a French version, sort of, of Earth Abides. Nuclear war destroys civilization except for small groups of survivors scattered in sheltered spots. Malevil is a castle which becomes the focal point for a small group of survivors, who gradually have to grapple with a petty dictatorship and a host of bandits and other undesirables. Merle raises a great number of interesting moral questions in this novel, psychological manipulation, Machiavellianism, the right of a farmer to kill someone raiding his crops--even if the raider is starving to death, religious and ethical problems of all kinds. His heroes often do unpopular, distasteful things. Realistically, Merle does not present us with a group of people unwilling to make unpleasant decisions in order to be "good", but shows us a much more accurate portrayal of real people making necessary choices. Had this appeared in paperback last year, it would probably have made the Hugo ballot.

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

The Swarm, by Arthur Herzog (Signet Books).

An awful lot of research went into this book about the possible mutation of the African bee, which really is threatening to introduce a highly aggressive insect into North America's ecology. To this real threat, Herzog has added several mutations, including a method by which they can survive in our colder climate (entirely plausible), and the ability to digest plastics and use them to make their venom highly poisonous to humans (less plausible). Herzog implies that there is some mystical meaning to the resurgence of bees, to teach mankind a lesson and to right an old wrong. The novel builds suspense extremely well up until the climactic scene, which is so dissatisfying--the bees inexplicably go away--that it nearly ruins the entire novel.

Flyer, by Gail Kimberley (Popular Library).

This is a first novel by a new writer who first appeared, I believe, in Roger Elwood's anthologies. Flyer is a post-catastrophe novel in which mankind is divided into three groups, normal humans (Walkers), sea-dwellers (Swimmers), and winged beings (Flyers). Two outcasts from this last group are instrumental in bringing all three societies together to unlock the secrets of the past, after a long series of captures and escapes, most of which hinge on the utter stupidity of either the captor or captee. Kimberley's basic story idea is familiar, and fairly well handled; it's the little details of motivation, background, pacing, and verisimilitude that get in the way. A stronger editorial hand and more practice might correct this.

Reviewer, Jim Goldfrank:

More Series?!

Here are a couple of potboilers whose authors and publishers seek to cash in on the names of Burroughs, Tolkien, and Lovecraft. Verb Sap nominates them for the "Decade's Worst" award. Each is declared to be the first of a series. The sequels will have to be better because they couldn't get any worse.

Dream Lords #1: A Plague of Nightmares, by Adrian Cole (Zebra Books; '75).

"Fantasy and horror in the tradition of Tolkien and Lovecraft." The book doesn't deliver what the cover promises. The first three pages mime the style of Lovecraft's "The Outsider". After that the style becomes stilted, and impossible to chew, let alone digest. The hero's name is Galad Sariel, an expansion of the name of Tolkien's elf princess, Galadriel. Thus Tolkien is invoked; there is no other comparison between this book and Tolkien's writing. In a future Solar System, Sariel shakes off the Dream Lords' stultifying influence to find that a really bad guy is using the Lords' illusion-casting powers for his own sinister purposes. He proceeds to fight them with trusty sword and "star lance", which disintegrates, burns, or shocks according to its power level. It recharges itself between times on solar energy. (Not even counting the fact that it would take years of charging to get that kind of discharge rate, the lance gets recharged at one point without the hero ever having been above ground. Pelion upon Ossa, or author carelessness on top of impossibility!) This book turns out to be an old-fashioned mellerdrammer cast forward and out into time and space. It has a ghastly style "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". Read it if you have time and money to waste; on second thought, go to sleep first, and pleasant dreams!

Balzan of the Cat People #1: The Blood Stones, by Wallace Moore (Pyramid; '75).

"The newest sensation in science fiction--the Tarzan of outer space!" If that isn't enough to turn you off, read on. Baby Balzan with his momma and poppa, were on the way to Mars when the ship hit a space warp and got thrown at least 10⁵

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

light-years. The baby survives to be raised by a kindly computer, and by the cat people with his foster sister Kittu. One day the grown Balzan is hunting zanthos in the Big Forest when the cat people are raided by reptilian humanoids on a slaving party for somewhat more evolved reptilian humanoids, the Kharnites. In the city of Kharn, Balzan joins the underground and finds two loyal but dumb Kharnite buddies. Everyone else in the city is villainous, sadistic, paranoid or otherwise unpleasantly meshuggah. These reptiles sweat when they meet the hero. (Ever hear of a snake sweating? Carry on, it gets worse!) Balzan resists the pass of the nympho queen, who turns out to be older than "She". She sends victims to the arena. Those who survive have their blood drained into a pool which feeds the bloodstones that give Queenie her vampiric immortality. Balzan destroys these; the queen shrivels to dust and blows away; the whole damn city crumbles in an earthquake; end of volume one.

The only thing unobjectionable about this book is an uncluttered straightforward style. Characterization and good background are completely absent. Ichor, gore, urine, and vomit run in torrents. The plot itself is a compendium of cliches, as you may have guessed by now. About all the author has failed to do is call Balzan's sister "Miss Kitty".

You'll have to flip a coin to see which book is the worst. Save \$2.50 between them, and subscribe to a good fanzine.

Reviewer, Martin Morse Wooster:

The Valley Where Time Stood Still, by Lin Carter (Doubleday; '74; \$4.95; 179 pp.).

Lin Carter, the master mimic of SF, is at it again--this time imitating Leigh Brackett with a Martian yarn. Here we have M'Cord, a standard mercenary/soldier-of-fortune-adventurer type, prospecting for uranium. He saves a Martian prince, Thaklar, who in turn saves him from a Martian sandcat. They thus become "brothers", and go off on an expedition. It seems that Thaklar comes from an ancient house that knows the way to the Valley Where Time Stood Still, which is where the Martian gods hide out from the tourists. Accompanying M'Cord and Thaklar are Karl Nordgren, a Swedish scientist; Inga, his sister; Phuun, a Martian priest; Chaster, a Martian bravado; and Zerild, a Martian dancing girl. Of course they find the valley, after suffering through 100 pages of horrible privations.

The book isn't as vile as Carter can get when he really has his heart in it, but it is pretty bad. Carter's latest books, such as Time War and this one, have shown moralizing tendencies which have helped ruin them. We are continually reminded that the valley where everyone ends up is the Martian Garden of Eden. But, you see, this Eden doesn't have serpents in it; everyone brings in his or her own. (Hopefully dehydrated, to save weight.) Bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people, and those who are marginally bad get saved by a Fountain of Life that can wash everyone's sins away. One almost has the feeling that the Martian gods should put signs in the place saying, LOOK, BUT DON'T TOUCH.

And Carter suffers from his usual problems here--continual italicizing to signify something important, and exclamation marks flying all over the place ("It (the Fountain of Life) was filled to the brim with--glory! . . . That was what they saw in the crystal grail: a grail filled to the brim with foaming light! They stared--rapt-exalted!").

This one is only recommended as a time-killer or if you have vowed to read everything Lin Carter has written.

Review Extracts (From the Press):

From THE WASHINGTON STAR:

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) ---

A Midsummer's Tempest, by Poul Anderson (Ballantine; \$1.50; 229 pp.).

/Bob Menaker, Reviewer/ "... a nonpareil parallel worlds story with unexpected and delightful twists." (4/5/75)

Pluribus, by Michael Kurland (Doubleday; \$5.95; 184 pp.).

/Bob Menaker/ "... another of those after-the-Apocalypse novels that seem easy to write and even easier to make into B-grade science fiction movies--movies that don't give the field a very good name. . . Kurland writes well, letting his characters build up a good head of steam. Unfortunately, his plot never gets off the launching pad, as we don't find out until the last page." (4/5/75)

Shardik, by Richard Adams (Simon & Schuster; \$9.95; 604 pp.).

/Duncan Spencer/ "... /the author/ tries not only to use the forms of the epic, but also to create a new milieu for the epic, because the central event is a single life, that of a giant bear. . . /the story/ has little application to the problems of today. . . /it contains/ rich, steady, roaring, shining prose that's like nothing. . . /But/ Alongside the complex web of the Shardik story--dark, swift, passionate--the human actors are flimsy and wooden, as if the author had spent far more time on the moors, downs, marshes and forests than in the company of his own species. This is the failing of Shardik, and it's a big failing, for it makes the book more difficult, more out of the stream of modern fiction. We're used to thinking of novelistic experience in terms of this thing that Shardik lacks: subtle delineation, sure sketches that spark some sympathy with our own experience. . . ." (4/5/75)

From THE WASHINGTON POST:

The Swarm, by Arthur Herzog (Signet; \$1.95).

/Joseph McLellan/ "A peculiarly chilling story about a mutated form of aggressive and poisonous African bees, which nearly destroy civilization. The actual telling is well detailed and much more plausible than a summary can indicate and the scene of battle between bees and humans for New York City is quite spectacular. . . ." (30/5/75)

When Harlie Was One, by David Gerrold (Ballantine; \$1.50).

/Joseph McLellan/ "A touching and thought-provoking novel about an experimental computer . . ., which investigates the nebulous borderline where human personality and human rights begin." (30/3/75)

Chimera, by John Barth (Random House; \$6.95; 308 pp.).

/Paul West/ "... Barth, instead of composing realistic fictions that insinuate mythic archetypes, chooses to address archetypes head-on. He isn't updating myth so much as pushing his own present backward; and this makes Chimera demanding reading--demands the brain is grateful for. . . /Chimera is/ crammed with intellection and resonant cross-references, a sly tenderness and a hankering after the sciences. . . stylish-maned, tragically songful and serpentine elegant. . . " (from the archives: 28/9/72)

More Than Human, by Theodore Sturgeon (Ballantine; \$1.50).

/Joseph McLellan/ "This story of how a group of social outcasts came gradually together and formed by telepathic empathy a single compound personality is Sturgeon's greatest work and one whose publication in the early 1950's marked a quantum leap in the development of science fiction as an art." (30/3/75)

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

II. FICTION: COLLECTIONS.

Deathbird Stories, by Harlan Ellison (Harper & Row, NY; '75; hb; \$8.95; 334 pp.).
 /Reviewer, Thomas F. Monteleone/

Before you even read this book, you get the feeling that maybe you should be impressed. The cover painting by Leo and Diane Dillon, the interior graphics, in fact the complete packaging by Harper & Row is beautifully stunning. In addition, there is a "Caveat Lector" before the title page which states:

It is suggested that the reader not attempt to read this book at one sitting. The emotional content of these stories, taken without break, may be extremely upsetting. This note is intended most sincerely, and not as hyperbole.

H.E.

Now, that's not exactly something you find in your run-of-the-mill speculative fiction anthology.

In fact, if this book had not been produced (I hesitate to use the simple word, "written") by Harlan Ellison, you might get the idea that Deathbird Stories is a fairly pretentious book. It is subtitled "A Pantheon of Modern Gods", and Harlan's introduction explains that the stories mark the completion of a ten-year cycle of tales concerned with the Idols of the 20th century--the gods of technological man. There is also some talk about the creation of new myth cycles and the implications of such new mythologies.

I'm sorry that I was not able to find a large enough chunk of free time in which to read the book at one sitting; I would have enjoyed the chance to put one of Harlan's statements to an empirical test. I did however manage to read the collection very quickly (within 24 hours of receiving it); I was not particularly upset by the experience, but I was very impressed.

Each story is preceded by a short, epigrammatic note--a radical departure from Harlan's customary italicized tirades. I always liked the old Ellison format because it let me see so much of Ellison's personality, in addition to giving some interesting background on the stories. But in the case of Deathbird Stories, the prefatory material isn't missed at all. There are nineteen stories in the collection, of which only two are stinkers and one a bit long-winded. The remainder range from very good to excellent.

Fans of Ellison will no doubt recognize many of the titles, especially some real war-horses like "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" and "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin". But there are also some other pieces that have the potential to be equally famous with the passage of time, such as "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs" (which deals with an incident that has plagued Harlan for a long time, and which he handles with masterful control--a fine piece of writing), "The Face of Helene Bournow", "At the Mouse Circus", and "The Deathbird".

The real appeal of these stories lies with Ellison's ability to portray the seamier sides of Homo sapiens. His writing reaches below the belt; it cannot help but provoke the reader into doing something that can be very uncomfortable: thinking. Ellison writes about the sleazy, the fearful, the vile, the unspoken, the very depths of human endeavor. It is a singular kind of loathing--that which we feel when we look into a mirror and do not particularly like what we see--of which Ellison writes. It would be understatement to say that he is a visceral

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

writer. His images are not the neo-romantic musings of the literateur, nor technological symbols of the hard-science translator--but rather the ones which form after the primal juices have flowed and the residues have begun to coagulate. The entire collection, read together in the form of the "myth-cycle" as Ellison intends, is a powerful book. Taken as a gestalt-like experience, Deathbird Stories is certainly greater than the sum of its parts. It is an important book that cries out to be read. Get this book and read it. I'd like to say enjoy it, too.

But I'm not sure that's possible.

It's too damn scary. Too damn real. Too damn good.

Combat SF, ed. Gordon R. Dickson (Doubleday; NY; '75; hb; \$6.95; 204 pp.).
Reviewer, Martin Morse Wooster

War, as Gordon Dickson astutely observes in his introduction, has become the pornography of today. Dickson, whom one would not normally think a pornographer, has compiled this anthology for those "with a technical interest in combat" and for "generally discerning readers" who would be interested in intellectual arguments about war. Let's see how well he does.

(1) Keith Laumer, "The Last Command" (ASF 1/57): A war-robot, buried for many years, burrows out of its storage pit and prepares to resume the war. A good, exciting story, showing Laumer at his best. (2) Ben Bova & Myron R. Lewis, "Men of Good Will" (GALAXY 6/64): How a war between the Russian and American moon-bases started...and temporarily stopped. (3) Joe L. Hensley, "The Pair" (FANTASTIC UNIVERSE 7/58): A silent peace between two soldiers on opposite sides of a galactic war. (4) David Drake, "The Butcher's Bill" (GALAXY 11/74): Hammer's Slammers, a standard space mercenary legion, land on Dunstan and act like demons. These mercenaries are evil and nasty, and Drake is so impressed by their perfidy that he shows their wickedness by writing a bad story. (5) Joe Green, "Single Combat" (NEW WORLDS 8/64): Kala Brabant, a Black professor of poetry, is impressed into service against the Flish, Earth's foe, and duels the Flish in psionic combat on an alien planet. Basically enjoyable, until Green throws in some cheap symbolism that really doesn't belong here. (6) Poul Anderson, "The Man Who Came Early" (F&SF 6/56): Would a soldier of today survive in the age of the Vikings? Gerald Roberts does just that, as he is blasted from the Reykjavik of 1955 to the Iceland of the Vikings. Filled with Old Norse lore and the gusto of a writer who loves what he is writing about, this is Poul Anderson at his very best.

(7) Fred Saberhagen, "Patron of the Arts" (IF 8/65): Those nasty berserkers are at it again, this time attacking an art museum in space. (8) Joe W. Haldeman, "Time Piece" (IF 7/70): A rough draft for his Forever War series; would rather have seen a selection from the series proper, where his ideas were more fully developed. (9) Gordon R. Dickson, "Ricochet on Miza" (PLANET STORIES 3/52): How one hunts the Warlin and how the Warlin hunts you. (10) Harry Harrison, "No War, Or Battle's Sound" (IF 10/68): Dom Priego, literateur, bombs an Edinburger ship and has various perils along the way. Good, but was this really written by the author of Bill, The Galactic Hero? (11) Jerry Pournelle, "His Truth Goes Marching On": The only new story in this book, this isn't a Falkenberg tale, but Falkenberg and his mercenaries are in the vicinity, signing up recruits. The CoDominium armies land on Santiago and are engulfed in a war between Spanish monarchists and Spanish republicans. Enjoyable (and besides, no writer has ever fought the

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

Spanish Civil War in outer space before). (12) Gene Wolfe, "The Horrors of War" (KNIGHT '71): Tank-grown creatures fight the Vietnamese War, as one human(?) reporter(?) tries to find out how things are at the front. As is usual with Wolfe, he tries to be so universal in his themes that his stories eventually diffuse into nothing at all.

Despite my reservations about some of the stories, Dickson is a good anthologist, and his selections convey a wide knowledge about his subject. Seven dollars may seem too high, but the book is worth it. Recommended for everyone, especially for adventure lovers and fans of the Dorsai novels.

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The Feast of St. Dionysus, by Robert Silverberg (Scribners; '75; \$6.95).
/Reviewer, Stan Burns/.

This is a collection of five of Silverberg's recent novelettes. They are:

"The Feast of St. Dionysus", which deals with an astronaut who is ridden by guilt because he is the only one of three to return from the first Martian expedition. Searching for the means to expurge his guilt, he goes alone into the desert to try and recapture the feelings he had while on Mars, and to work out some solution to his problem--the love he feels for the wife of one of those left behind. While in the desert he hallucinates/experiences a religious conversion with a group of monks he finds/imagines living in that out-of-the-way area. The powerful use of simple language, and the authenticity delivered by real descriptions of the desert country, add to the impact of this story about what is reality, and where guilt truly lies in our increasingly shame-oriented society. I think that the story suffers, however, because I could never be really sure of exactly what was real, and what imaginary. In the book The Teachings of Don Juan, to which this story owes a great deal, the Yaqui sorcerer Don Juan knows that he can turn himself into a crow. Silverberg's protagonist, Oxenshuer, never really knows, however, and thus is painted as weak, dull-witted, lacking the control necessary to exercise his free will. In Don Juan, Castenada gradually discovers he can exercise stranger powers when he learns how to control his destiny, worldview, cultural symbolism. Castenada thus gains power and control, while Oxenshuer loses it....

"Schwartz Between the Galaxies", about someone taking a rocket flight between cities in the future, and imagining himself to be aboard a Starship in the distant future. While it is an interesting comment on the power of imagination in a world suddenly grown small and barren, with everything the same in every location (what is the joke about not being able to tell which country you're in by looking at the insides of a Hilton hotel?), it might have been more effective if it had been set in the present.

"Trips", which I found to be the most enjoyable story in the collection. What happens to a man when he becomes the complete tourist--able to change not just countries but worlds/continuum at his merest whim? How can he ever go home again, or for that matter be sure that he is home? Silverberg's character discovers that he had to be constantly on the move, tasting life in sips and nibbles, never being able to settle down to a full meal....

"In the House of Double Minds", which deals with a house of prophets who can foretell the future after an operation to separate the right and left hemispheres of their brains, and years of dangerous training to learn how to interpret the symbols created by this war between their two minds. But then one of the young initiates learns how to fuse his two halves together, cutting away the need for

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

all the mysticism and training. What will the rigid static society do with him? This is probably the weakest story in this collection, since I found the entire premise for the story illogical--and I have some questions about the accuracy of the science involved....

"This is the Road", a nice, searching fantasy about a band of travelers fleeing a group of invaders ravishing their land. Silverberg does a superb job in creating a believable world in which this action takes place, in which he searches for the answer to whether involvement is the solution to their problem, or flight and pacificism the way. Silverberg chooses flight, but personally I find that flight never really solves any problem--just look at schizophrenics.

Recommended.

In The Bargain Basement.

[Reviewer, Jim Goldfrank/

A couple of books which were not widely disseminated in hard covers have appeared in paperback. Verb Sap says "Grab 'em." These books deserve the attention of adventure-loving readers, who may have missed out on them because of price or availability.

Star Drift, by William Morrissey (Popular Library; \$1.25).

Ostensibly a juvenile, this is good reading for ages 10 to 80. It is a picaresque space-opera jaunt through a colorful universe, which traces the protagonist from a young man to a settled married man with a son ready to carry on his adventures. It originally appeared in hardback as Nail Down the Stars (see review in SOTWJ #145, pg. 3).

Sowers of the Thunder, by Robert E. Howard (Zebra Books; 1.75).

Donald Grant published this in hardcover in 1973 at \$12. It includes four short novels from the times of the Crusades and later. In them, Turk, Saracen, Tatar, etc., cross swords and wills of iron with Frankish heroes. ("Frankish" derives from an old word for "French", and actually meant European. Thus the heroes are variously English, Irish, Scotch, and German.) Each story is exciting and colorful, but the last--"Shadow of the Vulture"--is probably the strongest, and is partially an account of the Siege of Vienna by the Turks.

Sowers of the Thunder is introduced by Roy Krenkel. For the Grant edition, he did illustrations which are missing in the Zebra edition--the jacket, inside the front and back covers (which are not the same), and a frontispiece in color. The interior illustrations you do get. These are on-page sketches with the text formatted around them, plus four full-page drawings. Since the paperback is a photo-reduction of one-part-in-ten of the hardcover edition, the text and on-page illustrations don't come off too badly. However, some sketches that were in the wide margins have been dropped. The full-page illustrations have been reduced to two-thirds size, and are now too small to be effective. Still, the paperback only suffers by comparison to the original edition, and is well worth the price.

Capsule Reviews:

Reviewer, Stan Burns:

(Cont. next page)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

The Undefeated, by Keith Laumer (Dell #9285; 95¢; '74).

A collection of four early Laumer novellas dealing with his concepts of honor and duty. "Worldmaster" and "Night of the Trolls" have been in previous collections (since I don't get GALAXY and that's where they're from, I must have read them somewhere else). Neither is particularly outstanding; both are adequately written. "Thunderhead" is the best story in the book. It deals with a man's putting his duty above all else, even his life. It is well-plotted and effective. "End as a Hero" is another so-so story--a time-killer, but good for little else. None of the stories stands up to one of Laumer's earliest and best stories, "Diplomats-at-Arms"--the first and best Retief story, which, to my knowledge, has unfortunately not been reprinted. Compared to it, all the stories in this collection are sadly lacking.

The Star Road, by Gordon R. Dickson (DAW #UQ1127; \$1.25; '73/4).

A collection of Dickson's stories is always welcome. While all his work cannot be termed good, he is an accomplished craftsman, and always delivers an entertaining story. The stories in this collection, mostly concerned with the theme of space travel, deal also with some of the human problems that might be encountered in strange environments and different cultures. Nothing struck me as outstanding, but the book is fine for a few hours of good reading. Recommended.

Review Extracts. (From the Press):

From THE WASHINGTON POST:

Warm Worlds and Otherwise, by James Tiptree, Jr. (Ballantine; \$1.50).

[Reviewer, Joseph McLellan] "A dozen stories by one of the relatively new writers in the field, a pseudonymous (possibly) reclusive (as far as is known) man (the evidence seems to indicate) who lives (or at least receives his mail) in the D.C. area and dedicates his fiction to the proposition that life is a series of mysteries that we sometimes almost solve." (30/3/75)

From THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW (thanks, David McGirr):

The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium And Other Novels, by Harry Mathews (Harper & Row; NY; 561 pp.; \$12.50 hb, \$5.95 pb).

[Reviewer, Edmund White] "This single volume, which contains three novels, could be used as a casebook to trace the development of a writer as he progresses from appealing cleverness to genuine literary skill and achievement. . . . The earliest novel in this volume, "The Conversions", was first published in 1962. It is a remarkable extension and exploration of the odd fictional devices invented by Raymond Roussel, the French proto-surrealist best known for his extravagant novels of fantasy, Impressions of Africa and Locus Solus . . . Tales within tales, meticulously described Rube Goldberg machines, coolly objective prose pulled around great chunks of bizarre information . . . The second novel . . . "Tlooth", originally published in 1966 . . . [is a] science fiction romp [whose title] typifies the frustration any searcher after truth must encounter. . . the final novel of this volume, "The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium", seems to me a comic masterpiece, as funny as Evelyn Waugh's Scoop, as intricate as Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire. Although it was serialized in the PARIS REVIEW, the novel deserves to be read at one sitting; this is its first publication in book form. . . [in it Mathews] has created a seamless fabric, as tense, light, and strong as stretched silk." (18/5/75)

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

III. FICTION: ANTHOLOGIES.

Infinite Jest: The Lighter Side of Science Fiction, ed. Robert Silverberg (Chilton; '74; hb; \$5.95). /Reviewer, Stan Burns/

"Venus and the Seven Sexes", by William Tenn. Old-fashioned SF humor, full of mouth-chocking words and outrageous plot. I've read too much of this type of story for it to have any humorous effect; all I felt was boredom.

"Babel II", by Damon Knight. Personally, if I were going to select one of Knight's stories of black humor, I would have chosen something like "To Serve Man" rather than this lightweight story about a gnome and his gifts (well, actually, it is about this alien who goes around buying original work with huge diamonds, and getting drunk with a device that scrambles the brains of humanity so no one can speak or write the same language).

"Useful Phrases for the Tourist", by Joanna Russ. Even on rereading, this is the most enjoyable piece in the book (also the shortest, four pages). Great satire on those little guide books they sell in train stations....

"Conversational Mode", by Grahame Leman. Conversation between a man and a computer psychologist. Wasn't funny the first time I read it, was worse this time....

"Heresies of the Huge God", by Brian W. Aldiss. Something of a satire on the Ballard school of disaster. Huge lizard comes to rest on Earth, destroying the Middle East. Religion grows up around it, worshipping it to leave. When it does, they start worshipping for it to come back, since its departure has knocked Earth out of its orbit. Above-average, but I have seen better Aldiss....

"(Now / n), (Now - n)", by Robert Silverberg. At best this story of a man who is in communication with himself of the past and future through a mental link is minor Silverberg. I didn't find it even faintly humorous....

"Slow Tuesday Night", by R. A. Lafferty. This is one of those Lafferty stories that work, where he succeeds in turning the world around 90° and showing some of the absurdities of our culture. Here we are introduced to Basil the pan-handler, who makes and loses three fortunes in one night. I found it delightful....

"Help! I Am Dr. Morris Goldpepper", by Avram Davidson. There isn't much I can say about this story--it's a classic in the field. It is about how Morris Goldpepper, DDS, and the American Dental Association save the world from alien invaders (who emigrate to California to get on the social security rolls because of their wrinkled and aged appearance). Very funny....

"Oh, To Be a Bobel!", by Philip K. Dick. It is unfortunate that this story reaches a conclusion in the center, and then ambles along toward the more predictable one at the end. Concerns a man who was genetically altered to become a spy during a war. Unfortunately, after the war he cannot be changed back--and he cannot hold human shape more than half the day....

"Hobson's Choice", by Alfred Bester. Another classic, about how yesterday wasn't quite as "golden" as we would imagine. The story, over twenty years old, is beginning to show its age....

"I Plinglot, Who You?", by Fred Pohl. Rather dated story about alien who tries to get the nations of the world to destroy each other--because he belongs to a race of cowards who don't want competition.

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

All-in-all, an above-average collection, but it would be wise to wait for the paperback....

Mother Was a Lovely Beast: A Feral Man Anthology--Fiction and Fact About Humans Raised by Animals, ed. Philip Jose Farmer (Chilton; '74; hb; \$6.95; xiii / 246 pp.). [Reviewer, Martin Morse Wooster]

The reader may have concluded from the title that this book is a piece of academic tripe. But who would expect tripe from Farmer? I guess this book has been germinating in Farmer's mind for a while--what with Tarzan Alive and all those novels about jungle types pouring from the prolific Farmer's pen, one would expect that he would eventually do a book on the same theme--men (we are promised women in the sequel) raised by animals. But let's see what we have.

(1) "The God of Tarzan" (Burroughs; from Jungle Tales of Tarzan, '17): Tarzan discovers God from reading the books in his father's cabin, and tries to find his own definition of what God is. He battles snakes, witch-doctors, and gorillas in this well-written and surprisingly philosophical jungle adventure. (2) "Extracts from the Memoirs of 'Lord Greystoke'" (new): "Greystoke" was allegedly interviewed by Farmer in a motel outside Chicago, and agreed to send Farmer portions of his memoirs, which are published here. "Greystoke" wrote these memoirs to correct misrepresentations made about him by Burroughs and Farmer, to whom he refers in his text as B and F. "Greystoke" tries to prove three things: that he is sexually active, that he can prove his existence, and that he can act as an anthropologist when he wants to. He shows that he is apolitical (somewhat of a libertarian, in fact), anti-Victorian (despite his age), and an interesting person. The myths he tells are fascinating, and the research he did is most interesting--one misses the romanticism of the original Tarzan novels, but appreciates the scientific objectivity. (3) "Tarzan of the Grapes" (F&SF, '72): Gene Wolfe rarely writes a good story, but here's a good one about a mysterious Grape Man who appears in the California vineyards. (4) "Relic" (F&SF, '66): An excellent Mack Reynolds yarn about Tarzan in the future, confronted by mechanization and bigness. Instead of strangling great apes or tigers, this Tarzan strangles restaurant managers and becomes the ~~mysterious~~ Monster, the terror of (I believe) Washington.

(5) "One Against a Wilderness" (BLUE BOOK, '36): Incredibly bad sludge about Kioga, a savage who battles flying exclamation marks and other awesome horrors in a primeval northern land. The author, William L. Chester, disappeared about 15 years ago; one wishes he had taken his novels with him. (6) "Shasta of the Wolves" (extract from novel, '19): Farmer says in his introduction that Olaf Baker's novel is an excellent book for children. It is whimsical, but reads like a cross between "Winnie the Pooh" and "Tarzan" as Shasta, adopted by wolves, sees the great outdoors for the first time and meets other wolf packs along the way. This is a good story to read aloud to children. (7) "Scream of the Condor" (GEORGE BRUCE'S SKY FIGHTERS, n.d.): You didn't think it was possible to combine, say, G-8 and his Battle Aces and feral men? Neither did I until I read this great piece of pulp about John Craig, a mysterious "kaydet" who, without very much training, shoots down German planes like--well--a condor? Turns out he was raised by 'em. This is a story one reads for the hell of it--for good, solid pleasure. "Out of the wall of flame a blasting explosion--then a stream of wreckage floating down through space like black embers and ashes rising from a fire, borne aloft by heat eddies." That's the sort of thing I like to hide behind by copy of PLAYBOY. Or is it the other way around...? (8) "The Man Who Really Was...Tarzan" (Thomas Llewellyn Jones, MAN'S ADVENTURE, 3/59): Was William Mildin the model for Tarzan? (9) "The Feral Human in Mythology and Fiction" (new): An interesting summing-up of the field by Farmer, with bibliography.

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN APICALS (Continued) --

Well, I had a good time with this book. I rate six out of nine stories and articles worth reading, which is a high enough percentage for me. Recommended buying for Burroughs Bibliophiles, anthropology fans, and unreconstructed pulp lovers. The rest of you should wait for the paperback.

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Space Opera: An Anthology of Way-Back-When Futures, ed. Brian W. Aldiss (Doubleday; NY; '74; \$7.95 (SFBC, .2.49); hb; 304 pp.). /Reviewer, Martin Morse Wooster/

Aldiss' previous book, The Eighty-Minute Hour, was subtitled "A Space Opera" because it had songs in it, which seemed to prove that not only did the characters not care what they were doing, but neither did the author. The whole book was written as if Aldiss, for the first time in his life, had decided to stop being literary and see just how much he could get away with. That also seems to be the tone of this book.

Space Opera is divided into four sections, each with several stories and an introduction by Aldiss. The sections (and the stories within) are:

(A)---Is Everything an Illusion? -- (1) Robert Sheckley, "Zirn Left Unguarded, the Jenghik Palace in Flames, Jon Westerley Dead" (Nova 2, '72): A pastiche/parody/thing, about sword-and-planet stories, more or less; (2) George Griffiths, "Honey-moon in Space" (extract from novel; ser. PEARSON'S, 1900): A giant space yacht lands on Venus and sings along with the inhabitants; (3) Daniel F. Galouye, "Tonight the Sky Must Fall" (IMAGINATION, '52): Tarl Brent, millionaire, playboy, and genius, discovers one morning that someone's out to get him. Or at least it seems that way, as he is miraculously protected from any danger by deus ex machinae in hordes. Brent finds his enemies, even as they try to get him by setting his former girl friends loose on him. But then the real menace gets free--a threat bigger than life, bigger than worlds, and bigger than the author, who can't handle the theme. True, Galouye tries his best to control the plot, mainly with lots of gunplay and a mad scientist...oops, I mean psychiatrist. But the story goes haywire, anyway, as too many unbelievable things happen at once. But no one has ever claimed that IMAGINATION was a very high-class 'zine....

(B)---Precipes of Light That Went Forever Up... -- (1) Edmond Hamilton, "The Star of Life" (extract from novel, '59): Kirk Hammond goes blasting around the cosmos trying to find the Elixir of Life and, in this extract, is looking for it in the Trifid Nebula. One can't really judge this section without reading the novel. (2) Jeff Sutton, "After Ixmal" (AMAZING, '62): So-so tale about the last computer that Asimov does better later on. (3) Thomas N. Scortia, "Sea Change" (ASF, '56): Excellent story of the cyborgs sent to build interstellar drives, with a surprising amount of psychology for the ASTOUNDING of that time.

(C)---Exile Is Our Lot -- (1) Philip K. Dick, "Colony" (GALAXY, '53): What would it be like to live on a planet where the life already there could change its shape into anything inorganic? Yes, I know it sounds like Chameleon Boy, but one expects more than that from Dick--and gets it. (2) Leigh Brackett, "The Sword of Rhiannon" (extract from novel, '53): Matt Carse, hard-bitten Martian space rat, finds the sword and is plunged into the Martian past. The first four chapters from the classic sword-and-planet novel. (3) Ray Bradbury, "All Summer in a Day" (F&SF, '55): The nation's oldest little boy has another icky-poo tale about all the horrid things Venusian children do when it stops raining. (4) Jack Vance, "The Mitr" (VORTEX, '53): A poignant story of a human castaway in a world of beetles.

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

(D)---The Godlike Machines -- (1) A.E. van Vogt, "The Storm" (ASF, '43): Here we have nothing but booming confusion as we are thrust into the middle of a war between Imperial Earth and the Fifty Suns. The Suns, or Dellians, send an agent, Maltby, to board the Earth flagship captained by Gloria Cecily. He drives them into an interstellar storm, and they narrowly escape by blasting him with mind rays or something. But, what ho, he has two brains--one with an I.Q. of 191, the other with one of 917! Anyway, he and Gloria Cecily narrowly escape, and land on a convenient hostile planet, where they fall in love. Aaaaagh! (2) "The Paradox Men" (extract from novel, '53): Charles L. Harness is at his best here, as he tells about Alar, a thief who boards a solarion, a device used to collect muirium, a power source. His disguise is discovered, and he is left in the solarion to die. How he survives the trip through the sun is quite thrilling, and makes one want to read the complete book. (3) Randall Garrett, "Time Fuze" (IF, '54): A corny way to blow up the sun. (4) Isaac Asimov, "The Last Question" (SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, '56): Another familiar, but good, story about the last question asked to a computer and how it was answered.

In judging this anthology, one must first ask, Why was the book compiled? To make money, of course, but what else? One must realize that Aldiss is a literary critic by trade, and he is trying to make space opera literary. Quoting Tennyson and Thomas Hardy won't do it, so what will? Nothing, so Aldiss tries another trick. By giving us a run of several poor stories in a row, and then throwing in one good one, he manages to hold our interest all the way through, while subtly undermining our taste for this sort of thing. Besides, who can say that this book is representative? Where is Anderson? Where is Dickson? Where is Laumer? Good grief, there's no Doc Smith in here! How the hell can you compile a book of space opera without Doc Smith???

This book is a waste, folks. Not only a waste, but a dirty propaganda trick. I understand that there's already a sequel out in England. See why there's no justice in the world?

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Capsule Reviews:

Reviewer, Stan Burns:

A Shocking Thing, ed. Damon Knight (Pocket Books #77775; '74; 95¢).

Reprint collection of the weird and the macabre. Looking over the table of contents, I found several old favorites: "Casey Agonistes", by McKenna; "Fondly Fahrenheit", by Bester; "Bianca's Hands", by Sturgeon; "The Year of the Jackpot", by Heinlein. After reading, I found several other good stories by authors new to me. Like Bierce, Collier, J.C. Thompson. I was impressed by many of the stories new to me, and glad to reread some old favorites. Good collection. Recommended.

Strange Bedfellows, ed. Thomas N. Scortia (Pocket Books #77794; 95¢).

Paperback of last year's collection of original and reprint stories dealing with sex and SF. Contents: "Push No More", by Silverberg--an interesting first-person account of a telekinetic coming to the age of sexual awareness, and how he uses his powers to "fulfill" his sexual fantasies; "The World Well Lost", Sturgeon's classic story of brother love; Mel Gilden's weird "What About Us Grills"; and "Mother", by Farmer. Plus several others that range from read-and-toss to above-average. All-in-all, a good collection, and you can't beat the price....

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(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

IV. NON-FICTION.

The Billion Year Spree, by Brian W. Aldiss (Schocken Books #SB450; \$2.95; also in hb from Doubleday; '73; \$7.95; 339 pp.).
 /Reviewer, Robert Bryan Lipton/

A reviewer who approaches a volume sub-titled "The True History of SF" does so with a certain amount of glee. He will, hopefully, be able to tear the stuffing from behind a shirt, to denigrate the author for his lack of skill in fiction, and--best of all--be able to pontificate on his own opinions of SF in full detail. These, naturally, were my thoughts when I began reading this book for this review. Ten days later I put it down, somewhat exhausted.

This book has the opposite defects to Sam Moskowitz' histories. To Moskowitz the field is a happily low-brow mishemagoss which straggled into being in the late nineteenth century. Aldiss considers science fiction, at its best, to be literary works of a type that has roots reaching down to Lucian. Moskowitz emphasizes the sense of wonder; Aldiss emphasizes the "meaningful" work. Moskowitz' control of the language is pedestrian at best, while Aldiss' is superb.

To my mind neither has produced a good history of SF, although Moskowitz has come closer, mainly because he discusses SF, while Aldiss uses four pages to go over Kafka.

Even so, I find myself agreeing with most of Aldiss' major points. He states, correctly, that SF does not begin with Lucian or Genesis, but with Mary Shelley. He then goes back, from Lucian to Walpole's Castle of Otranto to discuss the great-uncles and other relatives of the field his book is supposedly about. Up to here I agree with his analysis.

But then his book goes off the tracks. He seems to be more interested in discovering the hidden urges behind his authors than in considering their works. For example, he hints darkly at some sexual deviation of Verne's because that author's works use women only grudgingly...whereas a few pages earlier Verne has been described as a misogynist. Aldiss does not mention the hordes of writers of voyages extraordinaires except for Verne (despite his later complaints that Anglophiles don't bother to read foreign languages, he has failed to do this homework that Moskowitz took care of).

After H.G. Wells Aldiss becomes largely dissatisfied with the field. He despises Burroughs because Burroughs wrote merely to entertain (what's wrong with that?); he takes two pages to dismiss Lovecraft as an emasculated Hodgson; he claims that only the "Herbert West" series is SF, ignoring utterly the fact that "Shadow Out of Time", "Color Out of Space" and "Whisperer in the Darkness" are science fiction, and well-received outside the ghetto walls of the day. Gernsback is correctly dismissed as knowing nothing about literature, and the field is apparently barren until John Campbell takes over ASTOUNDING, ignoring the dozens of reprints of Wells and Verne, the works by Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith (he does mention Smith, long enough to call him unreadable).

The book seems, towards the end, to be a listing of authors' names, with particular emphasis on Moorcock's NEW WORLDS group, with the rate of mention of authors rising to an asymptotic limit in 1970.

Even so, Aldiss drags in many works that have no real place in this history. As I said before, more space is used to discuss Kafka than Lovecraft. There is

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VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

more time spent on Thomas Hardy than on Robert Heinlein; more on Tennyson than on Tenn; more on R.L. Stevenson than on Sturgeon; and so on.

The problem may be one of the differences in perception of SF on the two sides of the Atlantic. Perhaps Aldiss thinks Moskowitz' books concentrate too much on the lower ninety percent of the field, but is too polite to say so. British SF has usually been able to get along with the higher forms of literature than has U.S. SF. Serious British authors have long read and used the ideas of SF without looking like they were slumming. Even so, this does not excuse Aldiss' devoting a large section of his book to discussing books within the pale of "class" which have little to do with the field. It strikes me as the same sort of uppityness as that of the people who try to prove SF is important by claiming that Lucian, et al. wrote it.

So what are the other "major points" of Aldiss with which I agree? They are the heart of the matter, the individual works. Aldiss gives most important modern SF authors a few mentions. Interestingly enough, he rarely says an important writer is bad. He will classify him as "successful" or "popular"; Bradbury gets this treatment, as does Vonnegut. His critique of Heinlein is the best I have seen outside of Panshin's book. That of Asimov is the best I have seen anywhere. His taste in modern authors is not mine. He leans towards the "New Wave", or what he terms the real New Wave, whereas I prefer the technological joyrides of Niven. He seems, naturally enough, to be better-acquainted with British authors than I. Hardly surprising!

He states before he begins talking about the sixties that his evaluations are preliminary, and will probably be found to be inaccurate. He likes to hedge his bets.

This book, overall, is a good antidote to Moskowitz' plebian works, although the last few chapters appear rushed. Still, the first half of the book, up to the end of Wells, is a joy, and his chapter on Campbell and ASTOUNDING is one of the most perceptive paeans I have ever read. Buy the book and read it, if only for these sections.

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Dreams From R'lyeh, by Lin Carter (Arkham House; '75; \$5.00; 72 pp. / Foreword by de Camp; ghoulishly humorous cover by Tim Kirk). / Reviewer, Jim Goldfrank

Poetry must be written with love, or it will be dull and mechanical. It must compress realms of idea, experience, sensation, and emotion into a relatively few words. The creative poet compresses these into a poem. It takes a creative reader to recreate the poem into the larger world of the poet's imagination, to reconstruct for himself a world of vicarious being. Thus, depending on the reader, \$5 for a book of poetry that can be read through in a short time may not be a rip-off price. A fine book of poetry is to be read, and reread, as it was written--with love.

The "Dreams From R'lyeh" sonnet forms 60% of the book. This is 31 sonnets with the icorish flavor of Lovecraft's Fungi From Yuggoth. They trace the devolution of a young man into something left undescribed, and better so. Their Lovecraftian references will not go unrecognized, nor will their descriptions and emotions fail to send a delicious chill of horror up the spine of the perceptive Lovecraft fancier. Good in themselves, they fail as a whole by working up to a climax that is no climax at all. The fact that the cycle builds up to the utter frustration of a sneeze that doesn't constitutes a marring factor.

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS, AND ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

Also included are some poems in the style of Clark Ashton Smith. They reflect Smith's style of thunderous grandiose emptiness, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". Other poems like "All Hallows Eve" and "Shard" evoke visions of horror or beauty; here you may watch the pictures form in your mind's eye. "The Wind in the Rigging" uses meter to convey the feel of a sailing ship. "Dionbar's Song of the Last Battle" is a martial sword-swinging epic that sets a prelude to the author's Thongor series (would that the series had been as good as the poem). Some gentle Dunsanian poems follow: "Elf King's Castle" and "The Forgotten". "Golden Age" is a beauty, told by a romantic dreamer; its thesis is that although mankind may abandon its heroic myths, miracles will happen; new myths will be created. "Lines Written to a Painting by Hannes Bok" will mean most to another Bok lover. From nine lines and creative visualization, and a knowledge of Bok's form and style, the entire painting may be seen. "Death Song of Conan the Cimmerian" closes the book, recounting the hero's life and philosophy.

Here is a book that, despite weaknesses, will be amply rewarding to a reader already familiar with the poet's subject matters.

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The Science Fiction of Isaac Asimov, by Joseph F. Patrouch, Jr. (Doubleday; '74; \$6.95). /Reviewer, Stan Burns/

Critical examinations of writer's works are often hard to review. What does one say? "Recommended for libraries, collectors, and Asimov freaks"? That reading a 270/-page book on one writer can become boring? (It can, unless the reviewer has enough interest in the subject to continue through repetitious passages that reiterate what the author has said in previous chapters...which is to be expected when the author is examining almost all the works of such a writer as Asimov--whose output is phenomenal.)

Patrouch has chosen to do a "nuts and bolts" critique--to examine how "his stories are put together. What specific things in specific stories work and what things don't, and why?" Furthermore: "... I observe, I assert, I demonstrate, I evaluate--all on the basis of craftsmanship." Those who are looking for deep insights into the psyche of Asimov will be disappointed in this work--such are not, to a great extent, present in this volume.

Patrouch tears into Asimov's work with all the gusto of a college writing teacher going over his student's first submissions. But never viciously--he's always looking ahead toward the work in totality, to its improvement rather than its destruction. The emphasis as a whole is toward plotting and internal consistency, structure and characterization--rather than toward style and theme.

I think that this volume would be valuable to the beginning writer--that he might gain some insight toward the mistakes he might be making by reading about the mistakes that Asimov has made (or rather, that Patrouch claims he has made), and learn how to overcome them. And I can think of several writers who could (and desperately need to) improve their work. Reviewers might get inspiration from this book to dig deeper into subjects under discussion, rather than gloss over books with fast and shallow judgments. (God knows, I'm guilty of this at times--and I can only claim lack of time and space as an excuse.)

Recommended. Most people would probably want to wait for the paperback, since \$7.00 for this type of study might be beyond their budgets....

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Operational Procedures Supervised by Richard Delap

Magazines for September 1974.

Only four magazines this month, with the finished products well standardized as to quality (with the exception of GALAXY, which presents the worst selection of short fiction I've seen under one cover in a long time). F&SF still has the best features, with a fine book column by John Clute, Baird Searles' always-intelligent film/TV reviews, and a really excellent science article on evolution by Isaac Asimov. GALAXY has no features worth mentioning this month, ANALOG's science column is much too specialized to interest a general readership, and L. Sprague de Camp's discussion of the life of William Morris, in a special column for FANTASTIC, is more entertaining and informative than his judgments on the author's fiction.

As for the stories, well, read on....

FANTASTIC -- September:

Serial:

Will-O-the-Wisp (part one) -- Thomas Burnett Swann.

Short Stories:

Tattered Stars, Tarnished Bars -- Gordon Eklund.

Objective and subjective reality clash head-on in this unusual but eventually demoralizing story. The plot concerns a friendship between a young black Air Force lieutenant and a very old white lady in Mississippi, and when the lady's fantasy-world of 1863 frighteningly impinges on the "real" world of 1963. The ending is hazed with a plea for compassion, but it doesn't distill the gloomy and oddly offensive pessimism that seems to strain against the reader's good will. Black Hawk of Valkarth -- Lin Carter.

Carter gives us a tale from the youth of Thongor of Lemuria, a swords-and-sorcery hero by which the author has achieved a minor measure of success. Here we learn of the great battle that destroyed his nation and his family, an awful carnage leaving Thongor with a task to accomplish--"And its name was Vengeance." The problem with Carter's writing is that dead prose style that can't possibly bring color into the contrived action. His scenes of violence and brutality are dim and washed-out, like muddy watercolor, and his plot is the usual silly melodrama so common to this much-abused genre. Dull.

Poets and Humans -- Geo. Alec Effinger.

Here's one of those stories written around a cover painting, but readers will be happy to find that Effinger let his imagination run free and created something quite pleasing. It tells of a world of giant wasps, a world where humans, stranded for 300 years, sustain themselves on hatred for the wasps, who all but wiped out the first colonists. But are the wasps really guilty, and are the humans worth sympathy? Good characterizations (both wasp and human) and a simple plot touched with stimulating ambiguities give this tale spirit and interest.

Present Perfect -- Thomas F. Monteleone.

A science fiction magazine editor spends his evening reading the slush pile, disgusted by writers' ineptitudes and the repetition of all the genre cliches. At last he finds a manuscript which begins--no, I'd better not give it away. I'll only say that Monteleone would do well to read his own fictional rejection slip: "To you this may seem original, but to our readers this story is old hat." Ho-hum.

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

Hanging -- Barry N. Malzberg.

And hang it does, right between soulful confession and satire, as Malzberg recounts the thoughts of a writer who has spent years contributing catch-phrases and jingoism to our language. Dependent on the unseen distributors, he comes to realize the extent of his subservience when he's informed that he's created too much material and will have to retire for a time. Both writers and readers should gain insight from this realistic "fantasy" about hack writing.

Article:

Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers: William Morris: Jack of All Arts -- L. Sprague de Camp.

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ANALOG -- September:

Novelettes:

The Raven and the Hawk -- William Rotsler.

With the exception of "Patron of the Arts", Rotsler's stories have garnered very little attention, and this one is a revealing testament as to why such is the case. Here we meet David Fargin, a know-nothing, do-nothing, insignificant fellow who spends most of his time enjoying the adventures of Raven Blacksword, a fictional pop-culture hero whose absurd exploits are an endless stream of derring-do. David, blackmailed into spying for the United System Patrol, is the least likely person to end up in control of an all-powerful alien ship, the most feared/admired/respected rogue in the solar system. That he does so is but another example of Rotsler's catering to juvenile fantasies, which he half-heartedly tries to disguise by lacing his story liberally with sex and an attempted offhand satirical slant. It doesn't work, however, for the author's ugly sexism is always offensive and his so-called humor always seems undercut with a disrespectful sneering tone that is unpleasant. Not recommended.

All Which It Inherit -- Bernard Deitchman.

The African nation, Liberia, is a strange place in 1991, a place which never caught up with the advances of the rest of the world and therefore did not suffer quite so terribly when a hurtling chunk of Jupiter turned much of Earth into a wasteland. The story opens with political tones as Bukele, an "evangelist" for the mysterious piomdos (spirits who appeared after the catastrophe and supposedly reside in a variety of objects), travels by dirigible with politician Edward Massaquoi to what is left of America. From here on the plot introduces, at van Vogtian intervals, instant transport devices, a mile-high cube city, humans in frozen storage, humans in pure-energy forms, Jupiter transformed into a star, and the threat of the end of the universe. For all its wild ideas, however, it is clumsy, overlong, unbearably slow, and preposterously silly. It's fiction of the kitchen sink variety, hectic in concept and turgid in pace. Mediocre.

Whale Song -- Terry Melen.

Melen expertly hooks the reader with a suspenseful opening: an injured man, buoyed by his equipment but apparently lost in the middle of the ocean, becomes a target for an approaching shark. Rescued by dolphins and befriended by whales, the man spends the remainder of the story awaiting rescue. In the meantime, Melen not only gives us a glimpse of the future where the intelligence of whales and dolphins has been acknowledged, but introduces a romantic, ambitious and lovely speculation about the past that is spellbinding. The actionful opening is a clever (but not superfluous) ruse to lead the reader into a thoughtful realm of contemplative (but not idle) wonder. Very nice indeed.

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

Short Stories:

Touchplate -- Alan Brennert.

Brennert's touchplate--a device that links minds directly and wipes away all personal secrets like an eraser over a blackboard--has two uses: the first involving trust and a search for world peace, the second an even more dangerous proposition, an attempt to rekindle a communication failure between husband and wife. The touchplate itself is not explained, its mechanism as mysterious as the deep levels of understanding some people seem to have instinctively. But the emotional fears it unleashed are quite real, the implications quite disturbing when one considers how easily it reveals everyone's true enemy. Very well done.

The Mazel Toy Revolution -- Joe Haldeman.

A cranky pilot and a Martian-Russian Jew join forces in a plot to overthrow the ruling power of New Hartford, the giant conglomerate under whose thumb nearly all worlds are kept in continual debt. The two men become stranded on a small world and their plan begins to fall apart when a last-moment snag crops up unexpectedly. The story gets a bit too contrived near the finish, but Haldeman makes it all very jolly, full of spunk, humor, and fast adventure. Entertaining.

Black Fly -- George M. Ewing.

Nick Scarfone's plot to assassinate Chairman Tsiolokov involves an intricate series of scuba maneuvers along a river in North Ontario, to reach a forest villa where Nick proposes to execute his personal vengeance. Everything goes according to plan until the actual murder, at which we learn why the Chairman has managed to retain power for so long. Ewing writes well but loses his grip on the reader when the plot's sudden SF-nal slant takes an incredible leap into the absurd--sort of a Stepford Wives in political drag.

Science:

Inside a Neutron Star -- John W. Clark.

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FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION -- September:

Novelettes:

The Rescuers -- Ted Thomas.

Seven people descend in a probeship from an orbiting station into the depths of Jupiter's crushing atmosphere, searching for the cause of the Great Red Spot. It's a dangerous mission under any circumstances, but especially dangerous here as we discover that safety factors have been kept to a minimum--even the smallest equipment failure could mean instant disaster. What makes this story so interesting, and to my mind superior to Arthur Clarke's popular "A Meeting with Medusa", is Thomas' clever quick characterizations of the explorers and the convincing "scientific" (but not inhuman) attitude they possess. The conclusion is actionful, exciting, sense-of-wonder-ful. Very entertaining.

Twilla -- Tom Reamy.

I suppose, if one truly wanted to be unkind, one could harp about Mr. Reamy's dependence on standard shock values in this grisly horror fantasy. Granted, the plot is as creaky as the door of a haunted house: a teenage girl, Twilla, and her parents move to Hawley, Kansas, and from that moment forward the sleepy little town is disrupted by murder, sex crimes, and other inexplicable events that edge over into the occult. As the plot develops it turns ever more predictable, yet it is never dull because Reamy, bless 'im, writes so well. His pivotal character, an aging schoolteacher named Miss Mahan, is perfectly wonderful--level-headed, inquisitive, and subject to hysteria only when threatened by

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

a sixteen-foot demon (one chilling scene has the demon trapping her on the road-way in a car). Even the cliches can't hold back Reamy's ability to develop his story briskly, hooking the reader smartly with fine characterization and very nice descriptive touches. Old-hat stuff, yet, but decked out quite nicely. The Rest Is Silence -- C. L. Grant.

When life seems petty and out most intense hatreds turn mundane, it is a sign that cynicism has dulled our senses. Conversely, then, romanticism must also have its debilitations--and not something as trivial as naivete, either, but something dark and dangerous. Grant makes a valiant effort to capture a sense of dread on the battleline between these poles, with a story of school-teachers shifting from a workaday world to a quiet nightmare. Unfortunately the transition is sort of like melodrama in an ice cube: an icy and static picture that slowly melts into nothingness. It is stagnant, pretentious and, worst of all, banal storytelling.

Short Stories:

Goodman's Place -- Manly Wade Wellman.

Wellman returns to Appalachia for another go-round of strange doings in the backwoods, here with a friendly but mysterious outsider, Doc Ferro, the subject of sinister suspicions as he builds a cabin on a property shunned by both people and animals. For all the local lore and color, however, the plot is a bit tiresome, the young hero and heroine dropping into, then running away from trouble in an almost lackadaisical fashion that doesn't hold much suspense. Routine. Elephants Sometimes Forget -- Larry Eisenberg.

Emmett Duckworth is (groan) back, and now he's got some super-terrific eye-drops that give its users rapid comprehension and total recall. The university president is one of the recipients of the new drug, suffering from loosened teeth as a result, and Duckworth, as usual, must quickly develop a reversal treatment. It's the same old shtick, and I'm quite surprised (as well as annoyed) to see Eisenberg repeating it endlessly without variation. Awful.

Cathadonian Odyssey -- Michael Bishop.

Cathadonia is a fascinating, fever-dream world, a myth in embryo, a stage for a drama that grows in retrospect. It is a planet where one survivor treks across the endless marshland of small lakes and trees, searching for the ocean spotted from the spaceship just before it crashed. The survivor, a woman, travels with a companion, a small native creature she names Bracero; and the journey, so small and relatively insignificant in nature, becomes a quest on the nature of communication. The narrative slips between first- and third-person, keeping the reader unbalanced, expectant, prepared for the worst--but for nothing like what eventually happens, an ambiguous yet meaningful assessment of the power of love. Startling, sometimes breathtaking, it again proves Bishop one of the true stars of SF's coming new Golden Age.

Spacetrack -- Robert F. Young.

His companions dead in an accident, Henning is left alone to face five weeks of ftl travel, a fate which, according to theory, may very likely drive him crack-ers. But with the help of ANN ("the Administrative Navigational Neuroelectro complex that ran the ship and acted as housemother"), Henning is drawn into betting on make-believe horseraces, which prods him into investigating his string of losses, which in turn leads to an important scientific discovery. It's a minor but not unpleasant piece, passable if you don't mind the saccharine taste.

Science:

Look Long Upon a Monkey -- Isaac Asimov.

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

GALAXY -- September:

Serial:

The Company of Glory (part two) -- Edgar Pangborn.

Novelette:

The Splendid Freedom -- Arsen Darnay.

A young man, Grom Gravok, leaves his native world of Vizillo on his required Maturity Trip. His destination is Earth, where he hopes to witness the "Splendid Freedom" so different from the rigid discipline of his home. But Earth in the far future is an underground world, its surface lifeless, its people conditioned to living with imitations and unreal re-creations of the past. It might be helpful to discover what was in Darnay's head during the composition of this travesty of storytelling, since what emerges on paper is embarrassingly crude--juvenile slang (a poor attempt to play with language, a la Clockwork Orange), jarring inconsistencies and dead-end extrapolations, meandering dialogues, and, finally, a deadeningly monotone writing style that is astounding in its consistent boredom. Terrible.

Short Stories:

Nature's Children -- Doris Piserchia.

This rather heavy-handed satire-cum-allegory tells of the day when humans begin turning into pigs. It is conveniently set on a farm--a city would have been a difficult setting, as well as more prone to hopelessness--where a man and wife change from human to pig, back and forth, over and over, as they strive to retain their humanity by seeking wisdom and true communication with one another. Piserchia cannot wrest from it more than a fuzzy purpose, and it ends on a pivot of optimism that spins in a lonely circle. Fair.

Incident -- Rex & Elizabeth Levie.

The Biblical story of Cain and Abel has been remodeled for primitive apemen who are just entering the stage where they discover the use of crude tools. It is difficult to shake the image of 2001's "Dawn of Man" sequence (minus the alien influence here) while reading, even though the authors try very hard to convince us the discovery of tools came much later than pictured in that film. The story is contrived, utterly foolish, and surprisingly distasteful in its unneeded emphasis on gore. Ugly and trivial, it should be avoided.

Target of Opportunity -- Thomas Wylde.

Tick this thing off as pseudo-SF and be done with it. It's set approximately ten years in the future and concerns the military approach to getting our hands on the important Arab oil, exemplified by a mad colonel willing to trigger a nuclear incident with Japan. A brave pilot-hero saves the day, but not before we are treated to well over a dozen pages of droning detail that imparts all the excitement of a Rand McNally map. While it seems to preach against the danger of the fanatical militarist mind, it is written to appeal only to that type of reasoning. Poor.

Family Program -- J. A. Lawrence.

Norman and Jean are a normal married couple with everyday problems of the near-future--Norman worries about the security of his job, the energy crisis continues to grow darker, and Jean's "Mamma", an apparently senile old lady whose conversation is limited to a repetitious string of complaints, makes homelife just plain hell. This is the kind of '50's SF story we used to find amusing from writers like Kuttner, Matheson and Sheckley, none of whom would have written it with the leaden humor and obvious plotting we find here. Even if well done, it would not be very fresh in today's SF milieu, and why anyone would publish a stale idea which is also indifferently written is beyond me. Thumbs down, way down.

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

The August Revolution -- Mary Soderstrom.

An atomic test in the United States and an earthquake in Chile break in unison and the combined blasts trigger worldwide catastrophe. The question is: was it simply happenstance, or was the concurrence planned as a political move? The characters, a scientist and a doctor, are not only lovers but representatives at each disaster site when a third coincidental event turns the "controlled" disaster into a horror. The plot is fairly interesting, as are the people, but everything is rushed to a conclusion too quickly and the story sighs away to a whisper.

Article:

Television: Never-Never Land and Clarke's Third Law -- Dick Hoagland.

Science:

Technology and Brainpower: Two Revolutions -- Jerry Pournelle.

Art:

[untitled] -- Fidelis Z. Danilowicz.

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Magazines for October, 1974.

There are several good stories this month, scattered here and there, but the magazines' most consistent aspect is the number of typesetting errors. None of the magazines seems immune, as if a group of SF gremlins were hard at work in the printers' plants. AMAZING features a "requiem" for the space program, ANALOG has a "Special Velikovsky Issue", F&SF celebrates 25 successful years with a supersized Anniversary Issue, with the remaining magazines lacking in any distinctive features (except perhaps the startling decline in quality GALAXY continues to display). Otherwise no great new changes in format or presentation.

AMAZING -- October:

Serial:

The Domains of Koryphon (conclusion) -- Jack Vance.

Short Stories:

The Sun's Tears -- Brian M. Stableford.

Colfax is a wandering starman, originally from Earth, until the day his desire for a woman sends him in search of a rare jewel with which to buy her. This is an odd story, cast as a fable and utilizing a strange stylistic mixture that fluctuates between condescending simplicity and vaguely cynical suggestion. It is annoying and interesting at the same time, and I can't decide if its seeming clumsiness is purposeful or not. The reader must judge for himself on this one.

Stella Blue -- Grant Carrington.

This sequel to the mediocre "Annapolis Town" (Feb. '74) certainly has more drama, but again it is too shallow, suggesting complexities of character (if not of plot) that never are useful in the direct action of the story. This time we move to the future to discover what happened to the lady guitarist of the first tale, but she becomes only a thin symbol of despair rather than a realized character. Carrington's writing is improving, though his dialogue is still very awkward, but I do wish he'd start writing about something.

Downfall -- Jeff Jones.

If Malzberg would write an Ellison story (or vice versa) we might find it something like this brief study of a lonely astronaut on his way to Venus and

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

troubled by memories of his childhood when he crept away to isolation to avoid the taunts of his playmates. Jones doesn't make the rejection-syndrome-escalated-to-morbid-fantasy reach beyond its morbidity, and his story reads more like a textbook case than a drama. Fair.

Articles:

Requiem for Apollo:

Like the Sun in Splendor -- Sandra Miesel.

Space Through Our Fingers -- Jack C. Haldeman II.

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ANALOG -- October:

Novelettes:

Gone with the Gods -- Andrew J. Offutt.

Let's see now, if I can keep all this straight...there's this poor underpaid writer, his tightfisted publisher, and a guy who's invented a time machine. The writer goes into the past to set up all those mysterious "astronaut" cave-paintings, the plans for the Great Pyramid, etc., etc., etc., about which he writes a book that makes his publisher famous and leaves him fuming (you know how tricky those contracts can be). In revenge, the writer returns to the past and--well, it do go on. It's impossible to forgive Offutt for this storytelling mess. It's as illogical as the common illogic it is (supposedly) satirizing, and Offutt has perhaps the most incredible lack of comedic timing of any writer in the field, not to mention his sense of humor, which is way down at kindergarten level.. Stupid, pretentious, one big bore. Forget it.

A Matter of Gravity -- Randall Garrett.

Mr. Garrett received a Hugo nomination for his delightful alternate-world novel, Too Many Magicians (ANALOG serial, 1966), and all who enjoyed that story should heartily welcome back Lord Darcy and the world where magic is science, where the Plantagenets still rule, but where murder is still murder. Chief Investigator Darcy is summoned to inquire about a death in Normandy, where Count de la Vexin plunged to his death from a locked room in a tower. Rumor has it that it was the work of "demons", but Darcy is not so sure that magic was involved at all. The formal locked-room mystery, never an easy form to handle convincingly, is given a professional treatment here, with all the clues out in plain sight and Darcy's deduction straightforwardly satisfying. And, as before, Garrett's characters are quite marvellous. Just delightful.

Short Stories:

Truth to Tell -- Joe Haldeman.

Colonists from Earth, forced to land on a planet they name Thursday's Child, barely survived the nova flare which turned out to be a recurrent event at 83-year intervals. Two thousand years later, their descendants have forgotten their origin, the story of which exists only vaguely outlined in the much-derided "God-buk". Haldeman continues to be an able storyteller, though his odd thematic concepts still refuse to mesh neatly into the plot, here a twisted religious parallel that actually makes the story difficult to accept. It is, however, slickly written and more readable than is warranted.

Sleeping Dogs -- Harlan Ellison.

When Ellison takes the ANALOG story and molds it with his very special and distinctive style, you can expect an odd hybrid, and here it is, quite odd indeed. It's a rather routine plot of galactic battle (the Earth-Kyba war), in which a backwater planet becomes a burning hell when an Earth commander decides that any tactic is acceptable in the drive to win. What makes it interesting is

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

the female character, Lynn Ferraro, who failing to stop the destruction, still pleads for sanity in the aftermath. But fanaticism and war are craven beasts. The strongest always wins--and just try to figure out who's the strongest! Good of kind.

Inhuman Error -- Fred Saberhagen.

Two ships are racing toward a planet, one of them with a defense system for the on-world human colony, the other a berserker with the intention of wiping out the colony completely. Captain Liao, commander of the dreadnaught that is hot after both, must decide which ship carries the defense and which the berserker. Liao's dilemma is moderately suspenseful and readers should enjoy the way he solves it.

Contact! -- David Drake.

This is a quite unpleasant tale in which American troops in Vietnam are startled by an alien ship which lands right in the middle of a fierce battle. After spending over half the story on gory details of death, Drake then tries to make it all look heroic by having a captain murder the alien to insure his dying men's rescue. It is not that such a situation couldn't or wouldn't arise (and Drake obviously thinks that military higher-ups are heartless clods), but the story revels in its own bloodbath, which detracts from the problem it should be probing. Fair.

Articles:

The Search for Truth -- Frederic B. Jueneman.

CP -- Isaac Asimov.

Science:

Psychesomics: The Emerging Science of Consciousness -- Norman Spinrad.

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FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION -- October:

Novelettes:

Count Von Schimmelhorn and the Time-Pony -- R. Bretnor.

Papa Schimmelhorn returns in a new adventure in which, again, one of his inventions gets everybody into trouble. Now it's a time machine by which the whole family (and various hangers-on) are whisked back to the 13th century in Austria, just as the invading Mongols are preparing to seize a great castle and begin the overthrow of all Europe. Everything turns out satisfactorily, of course, and along the way we're treated to Papa's usual shenanigans with a pretty young princess (and Mamma Schimmelhorn's sweet revenge), as well as a lighthearted spoof of the "good life" circa 1241 A.D. High-spirited and amusing, the story is perhaps just a trifle overlong, but it's easy to sit back, relax, and simply ride comfortably along on this big ball of nonsense.

Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans: Latitude 38°54'N, Longitude 77°00'13"W
-- Harlan Ellison.

Lawrence Talbot, manacled to his bed at each full moon, at last comes into possession of a map that will lead him to the end of his misery. With the help of his friend, Victor, whose laboratory in the Carpathian mountains becomes the set for Talbot's journey into himself (literally!), he at last finds what he's been searching for...only it isn't quite what he, or the reader, expects. This is a really way-out story, at times hilarious, at others--especially near the end--maudlin. But it is a fascinatingly cockeyed look at (and through) the maze of nostalgia, touched with alternate moments of beauty and bathos. And somehow its imperfections seem right, almost calculated. A crazy but pleasant yarn.

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

The Pre-Persons -- Philip K. Dick.

Here's a future nightmare extrapolated from the abortion trend of today, a world in which children can be rejected by their parents (often for reasons of status) and murdered by legal authorities. The limit is set at 12 years of age, at which children supposedly understand "higher math", the legal definition of acquiring a soul. Dick's satire is so bileful and bitter that his story suffers for it. He injects no balance of any kind, and through the attitude of his characters, tries to shoulder the blame for this societal madness on bitch-goddess Woman. Geared along the scare-tactic approach of a scandal sheet, it fails to encourage the reader to think and is no more than blathering ugly propaganda.

In Iron Years -- Gordon R. Dickson.

After the collapse of the civilized world, not from bombs but from the combined results of failing economy and ecological rape, the country's survivors band into small townships whose struggles are so harsh that strangers are likely to be shot on sight. It is a world of the strong, and Jeebee, an intellectual depository of information, without the will to kill-or-be-killed, tries to move cross-country to Montana, avoiding confrontations along the way. Dickson's story is complete in that it shows Jeebee necessarily choosing between his peaceful resolve and the necessity to survive, but it reads like part of a longer work (a forthcoming novel?). While not outstanding, it is pleasant and entertaining, its familiarity as comfortable as an old shoe. Okay of kind.

The Seventeen Virgins -- Jack Vance.

Vance continues the adventures of Cugel the Clever (published as stories in F&SF in the mid-sixties, then collected in book form as The Eyes of the Overworld), but somehow it never quite works this time around. The "science of magic" in previous stories is no more than a parlor trick here, as Cugel shams his way into the good graces of the people of Gundar, then rougishly takes everything he can lay his hands on. His bounty includes the deflowering of fifteen of the title virgins, for which he is given to a monster-god for quick disposal. The plot lacks the sophisticated humor that might make its comicbook simplicity bearable, and the adult fairytale approach never quite comes off. Incurable Vance fans may find it tolerable, but others will be less inclined to enjoy it.

Short Stories:

Blue Butter -- Theodore Sturgeon.

How does one describe something like this? As a philosophical statement, an ecological warning, a domestic drama? There are elements of all herein, and yet the mixture is something different and peculiar, the bitter edge of reality poised for an extrapolative tumble (predicted by a computer) into a future where Earth may no longer be troubled by the parasite, Man. No, I can't really explain it at all, but I found it stimulating and quite readable. Try it, you might like it.

Nothing Like Murder -- Isaac Asimov.

Here's a new Black Widowers' tale (which series usually appears in ELLERY QUEEN'S), in which a Russian is a guest at a BW banquet, where he startles the members by announcing he's overheard a plan for murder in the park. The matter is solved, and the manner in which it is done is what makes this non-fantasy story of special interest to fantasy readers. Very light, frothy stuff, weightless but rather refreshing.

The Visitor -- Poul Anderson.

A terribly scarred man in a hospital, a mediator, and a man whose dreams hold some key to ESP are brought together for a meeting in which the dreamer relates the content of a recent dream, which in turn forms the body of this fine story. The dreamer meets a young girl living all alone, and as he visits her home, Anderson gives us a remarkable look at childhood, its sharply sensual de-

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

lights and imagination, its strange focus which makes reality selective and contained. The conclusion is heartbreaking, the preceding joy of communication between a lonely girl and her "visitor" intensifying the sadness that comes with the recognition of alienation that has no cure. Very well done.

Mute Inglorious Tam -- Frederik Pohl & C. M. Kornbluth.

Pohl keeps taking these fragments left by the late C. M. Kornbluth and weaving marvelously good stories that show no sign of half-worked seams. This one is quite unusual and convincing, set in Sessex in the year 1303, where a wretchedly poor and overworked Saxon serf lives dangerously in dreams. He imagines wagons moving without oxen, trips on air-roads to the stars, and trapped by his time, his lowly place in the world, he has no method of preserving these fantasies. Pohl brings both the character and period-setting to life, immersing the reader totally in an experience as "real" as a captivating dream. Very nice.

In the Land of Unblind -- Judith Merrill.

There's not much one can say about this "story"--which verges on verse, although Merrill insists "Do NOT call it a poem"--except that it examines perception, revelling in physical, sexual sensations and spewing out verbal reactions to them. It ends with an SF-nal question that lifts the whole concept into tour de force, gnawing on your funnybone in a quiet, subtle way. Strange but worthwhile.

Science:

Oh, Keen-Eyed Peerer Into the Future! -- Isaac Asimov.

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GALAXY -- October:

Serial:

The Company of Glory (conclusion) -- Edgar Pangborn.

Novella:

The Eastcoast Confinement -- Arsen Darnay.

Karl Schmidt, Berlin Superintendent of Police, is the one holdout against adopting American methods of controlling the general public after the catastrophic disasters of 1999-2000. Under political pressure, he travels to America (now called United Harmonies, under the control of the New Puritan Secular Order), where he discovers that the laudatory propaganda encouraging the use of "confinements" (areas covered by energy domes, which isolate trouble groups--non-whites, intellectuals, etc.--and keep the rest of society stable) is propagated by a quasi-religious order built on a concept of lies and hypocrisy. Essentially a protest against American middle-class values, the story is marred by character and plot contrivances that wriggle out of difficulties with convenient inventions and/or social attitudes. In spite of this, Schmidt proves a quick and sane observer, and it is his character that holds the reader's interest even when the plot is difficult to swallow. As a whole the story is generally a failure, but parts of it are interesting and some may find it worth reading for those parts.

Novelettes:

Under the Hammer -- David Drake.

I suppose you have to really get it off on war stories to like this one, in which a young recruit lands on a world where he's to join the mercenary Hammer's Slammers. There's a lot of aimless chatter to fill the pages until the Big Scene --wherein the Slammers' armored combat car is embroiled in battle with the planet's

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

guerrilla fighters--and we see that war is a nasty, bloody business. Aside from the supercar, some non-human whores, and the unearthly setting, the story might well have appeared in a men's adventure magazine (BLOOD 'N BAYONETS: Stories to Rip Your Guts!!), to which its exploitive manner would be more suited. Dull. Witch Children -- James F. Lacey.

There's a fairly interesting story in here somewhere, but you'd have to take time to clear away all the gobbledegook to find it. It's something about two societies in the future--one a city group in which each person's life is confined to cubbyholes and regulation, the other a more primitive group living close to the sea. The tie between them is a computer, a group of strange children, and a number of "relatives" who form a crossover between the societies. Like too many of GALAXY's stories of late, the plot is obscured as much as possible while the characters, most of them weakly drawn, bumble through a confusion that isn't very suspenseful or even very challenging--just boring. Dismal stuff.

Short Stories:

Easy Rider -- H. Carl Hill.

An alien named Armanth is delighted by the entertainment of sharing the mind of an antelope (or somesuch similar animal--the author isn't specific) as it becomes the victim of an attacking cat. The experience, Armanth finds, "was exquisite", and he's soon ready for something even more heady. What author Hill has in mind, however, is more like a sick joke than a plot, both silly and in rather bad taste. Poor.

The Last Destination of Master G -- Mal Warwick.

The Caste and its Duties, aboard a ship racing between the stars, have become vague and confused as history and purpose overlap in this time-shattered narrative. Unfortunately the reader is left as confused and unsure as the members of the Caste, each of whom apparently has his own concept of what he is doing. Warwick's mystery is tangled up in a cat's cradle of snarls, and I'm afraid he doesn't inspire me to work very hard at sorting it out. Mediocre.

The Long Night -- John Christopher.

Two men in a moon caterpillar are puzzled when their machine keeps breaking down, even more puzzled when they discover a strange blue "rock" attached to the machine's exterior, and finally worried as they find the rock is a lifeform that feeds on iron. The creature eats away as the men, unable to make radio contact for rescue, realize their danger. The solution is fairly obvious from the beginning, but Christopher makes its oversight by the men a reasonable delay. We don't get too many "problem" stories these days, and this one is okay of its type.

The Twist -- Tim Altom.

A petty criminal gets involved in a plan to steal a "dimensular unit" from a heavily-guarded lab, gaining access by working as a janitor. The problem with small-time criminals is that they aren't very bright, and this one, overconfident, makes a mistake that not only gets him caught but invents an escape-proof punishment. The best part of this minor but readable story is the first-person narrative of the criminal, his clumsiness sort of sad and appealing and ironic.

Science:

Ships for Manned Spaceflight -- Jerry Pournelle.

Art:

/untitled/ -- Jack Gaughan.

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WORLDS OF IF -- September-October:

Serial:

A Knight of Ghosts and Shadows (part one) -- Poul Anderson.

(Over)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

Novelette:

Mephisto and the Ion Explorer -- Colin Kapp.

SF fans with some knowledge of chemistry and spectroscopy will surely appreciate the careful work Kapp has put into this energetic story of rescue on a strange world, but any fan with a thirst for that near-indefinable sense-of-wonder should be delighted. "Flamers" are explorers who are "transliterated bodily into a sentient, gaseous plasma-state by electron stripping and ion pairing", in this story traveling down to the surface of Mephisto, a world of puzzles that hovers between being a planet and a sun. Lisbon, an experienced flamer, is sent to rescue six people in ion-state who have disappeared on Mephisto, and the rescue attempt becomes a thrilling and imaginative adventure of no mean proportion. Lisbon's professionalism is a real character trait, not just stereotyped heroics, and he holds the reader solidly throughout the exploration of Mephisto's breathtaking beauties and dangers. Very good.

Short Stories:

Such Is Fate -- Arsen Darnay.

To write a story about a man who is a total bore, as is the nondescript "hero" of this tale, demands that the events which befall him be interesting, or funny, or something. Darnay's old saw is to have him accidentally frozen and revived in the future, only to become victim once again. A gypsy fortune-teller predicts the man's destiny at the story's opening, and readers who stick around to see if her prediction is correct are just begging to be bored. Awful. (And, by the way, who the hell is Darnay--a pseudonym for Baen?)

Julie -- Jan Trenholm.

A man and wife, unsuccessfully investigating "psychically talented people", are delighted to come into contact with Julie, a 17-year-old pre-cog whose predictions of disasters become headline news. The couple's shaky marriage goes quickly to pieces, especially after the wife discovers her husband's romantic interest in Julie, who emerges as a perverse and dangerous girl. Trenholm writes well enough, but she gives away Julie's true nature much too early and rather negates the story's purpose.

Egantei and the Sage -- John G. White.

Egantei, the "Technarch of the Seven Worlds", is determined to protect his enormous Gallery of treasures from a thief who has publicly boasted he will steal them. To do so, however, Egantei is forced to make a deal with the Sage, Dry Wine, who is dirty and ragged and representative of everything Egantei despises. This might have been an amusing story, but White's humor leans toward the grotesque, without any redeeming style or wit, and the writing is often so clumsy as to be nearly incomprehensible.

Saying Goodbye -- Scott Edelstein.

When the alien Bardenians land on Earth, they immediately set to work cleaning up the mess we've made of our world. Their efforts are successful; but when, on orders from their home world, they're called away, humans are critical of their departure, which leaves us to sink back into our mess once again. While Edelstein may not be serious in his look at politics and human foibles, his amusing spoof does cause the reader to think seriously about what he's saying. Good of kind.

Non-Fact Article:

Death and Taxes -- S. Roger Keith.

John Brunner and others used to do these humor pieces, and while a few were mildly funny they were never really too successful. This latest addition to the series concerns legal problems arising when alien lifeforms get into the tangle of American tax forms. Good for maybe one strained chuckle, but be careful you don't choke on it. Minor.

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DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

Article:

Torchships Now! (conclusion) -- Robert D. Enzmann & Richard C. Hoagland.

Art:

/untitled/ -- Edward Kimmel.

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VERTEX -- October:

Novella:

Sunrise West (part one) -- William K. Carlson.

/to be reviewed with concluding installment/

Novelettes:

Definition on Tideworld -- Joseph F. Patrouch, Jr.

This is one of those rare SF stories which deals seriously with religion in the future--in this instance, Christianity. The plot is related along two lines: first, an interrogation into what happened when three explorers discovered life on the planet called Tideworld; secondly, a series of flashbacks relating the events on that world, where the humans' personal religious belief is vital to their interpretation of alien rituals. Although the story's conclusion is somewhat weakened by the author's last-minute interpretive ploy, which is patently geared to appeal to Christian readers, the story is otherwise quite well-written and well-stocked with surprises. Entertaining.

The Teacher -- Don Pfeil.

Jee cubs listen entranced to the stories told by the alien Mac'Ullute, one of which is about a search for the Elders, the mysterious, near-extinct race so powerful that many consider them gods. One Jee, the story's narrator, tells of how he not only discovered the outcome of that search (a conclusion never told by the Mac'Ullute, but eventually revealed by his companion, the Vrm), but found that he personally has a part to play in that quest. There are moments of interest in this decidedly old-fashioned story, most of them during the early descriptive passages, but none of them maintain much interest to the conclusion, which turns out to be a weary cliché, clumsy and annoying. Disappointing.

Short Stories:

Grow in Wisdom -- Mildred Downey Broxon.

A researcher in psi phenomena, a fat psychologist who simply can't stick to any diet, a rash of news headlines specializing in escalating disasters, and an unlikely coordination of them all in a grant-funded study of obesity--Broxon ties them all together in this clever story that looks at a very serious subject in a surprisingly amusing way. Most appealing are the characters, who are disarmingly, humanly individual. Pleasant.

Juryrigged -- Joe W. Haldeman.

If you take it that a huge city's every function could and would be controlled by a cybernetic system of brainpower, that citizens with the proper IQ and personality profile would be forced to serve one year in such a man/machine link-up, that a paranoid individual could slip by the screening tests and get lost in this cyborg maze and conceive a plan to rise to power--then you might be able to abide this tale of future horror. It is not, however, very convincingly told, and is more tiresome than thrilling. Routine.

Tallwaker -- Pater Martin.

Man meets alien, but author Martin is so eager to tell the story in a "different" way that he uses methods not only implausible but downright stupid. Instead of summarily relating the events of the meeting, he turns it into a mystery de-coded by computer--which not only ignores analytical problems but disregards the question of how it was recorded in the first place. Blah!

(Over)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

A Three Letter Word Called Love -- Walt Liebscher.

A man named Walt (apparently the author is speaking to us) tells of a day he was invited to a party in a strangely fog-shrouded district where the houses were like something out of an Arabian fantasy. He partakes of an orgy that stems from emotions of love rather than lust, and his life is changed for the better. As an idealistic pipe-dream, I suppose you could call this story adequate to its purpose, but it's really rather silly and adolescent.

Short-Short Stories:

Robo -- Marilyn Shea.

Ration Biscuits -- Charles Ott.

Retroflex -- F. M. Busby.

Primate -- Sharon Tucker.

The Shakespeare Show -- Scott Edelstein.

Another dreary bunch of short-shorts, the only light of promise Ms. Tucker's story about rape and tribal attitudes, with the "shock" ending not too original but written with an economy and style that makes one wonder if she will not perhaps be doing longer and better pieces quite soon.

Interview:

Vertex Interviews William Rotsler -- Terry Carr & Stephanie Bernstein.

Articles:

Space Vehicles from the Past -- Jay Arrow.

VABulous -- Neil Shapiro.

The First Observatory -- Igor Bohassian.

Power without Pollution: New Sources from the Sea -- Jerry Pournelle.

An Open Letter to Joanna Russ -- Philip K. Dick.

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S. F. CLIPJOINT: Misc. Review Extracts

Opera -- Help! Help! The Globolinks, by Gian Carlo Menotti (LIFE ?, Herbert Kupferberg): ". . . remarkable children's opera, a satiric yet tender space-age masterpiece. . . one of the most enjoyable and provocative musical works of the last decade. . . a musical parable about the entire mechanization of our times. . . /An army of Globolinks lands on Earth from space (the Globolinks being electronic-music people who converse "by means of blips, bleeps and squiggles; in the opera buzzing, whooshing sounds fill the auditorium whenever they appear"); guns, tanks, etc. are useless against them, and anyone they touch will turn into a Globolink within 24 hours; but they do have one weakness--they cannot stand "the sound of music--solid, melodic, old-fashioned music, produced by real instruments and played by real people. When they hear that, they scatter and flee.") . . . By the end of the 70-minute opera the meaning is clear; art is emotional, not intellectual, and music stops being music when it is all brain and no heart. ~~But~~ But Help! Help! The Globolinks needs no allegorical significance to make it enjoyable. The Globolinks themselves are creatures of fun, whirling dervishes that resemble top hats stacked one atop the other, spinning about in dizzying dance patterns. The children are a lively gang, and the school they attend has one of the most bizarre and diverting faculties ever gathered under one educational roof. . .".

Record -- Son of Dracula (Rabble; soundtrack from film, starring Harry Nilsson & Ringo Starr; BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE 5/5/74, Ernie Santosuosso; sent in by Dave McGirr): ". . . a bloodless bore. . . /Nilsson/ plays the son of Dracula with all the terror factor of a Pillsbury doughboy, and Ringo as Merlin . . . delivers his lines like the loser in a high school drama competition. . .".

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FANZINE FRICASSEE

Fanzine Reviews
by
Michael T. Shoemaker

I became an active fan in February of 1969. Ever since my entry into fandom I have annually read a vast number of fanzines, and virtually all the major ones. Out of those six years, the output of 1974 must rank as the worst in terms of quality written-content. That is not to say that poor material abounds, but that there has been less outstanding material. Furthermore, individual fanzines have not distinguished themselves as convincingly as in past years. The cause for this seems to be a general trend towards less-frequent publication. I do not know whether this is because of the economic situation or because there is less good material to publish, but the result has been a decrease in the amount of good material published. In other words, individual issues of the best fanzines are generally as good as ever, but since they appear less frequently, we are getting less of what is good.

When I picked my top ten fanzines last year I drew up a preliminary list of 22 fanzines. This year my preliminary list contains only 19. Five of my top ten from last year are victims of infrequent publication and did not make this year's list: CYPHER and RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY, seventh and ninth last year, have had only one issue each in 1974; THE WSFA JOURNAL, eighth last year, had two issues this year (one badly dated) which had an uneven mix of material; SF COMMENTARY and AWRY, second and sixth last year, each had two issues this year which were not up to their usual standards. Here are my top ten in order of preference:

- (1) TITLE -- Donn Brazier.
- (2) PREHENSILE -- Mike Glycer.
- (3) SF ECHO -- Ed Connor.
- (4) SELDON'S PLAN -- Cy Chauvin.
- (5) THE ALIEN CRITIC -- Dick Geis.
- (6) YANDRO -- The Coulsons.
- (7) RENAISSANCE -- John J. Pierce.
- (8) NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT -- Denis Quane.
- (9) TANDSTIKKERZEITUNG -- Don Markstein.
- (10) POWERMAD -- Bruce D. Arthurs.

TITLE #1's 22-33 -- Monthly; 320 total pp.; from Donn Brazier, 1455 Fawnvalley Dr., St. Louis, MO 63131. Circulation is limited to 125, but you can get on his waitlist by writing him a letter.

This is the third year that TITLE has been my favorite fanzine. Rather than repeat myself describing what it is like, I am going to let some fellow TITLERS speak for me. These quotes are taken from #24, the second anniversary issue:

"What do I remember about TITLE? Its people. Its people-oriented sections. It is listening to 100 people."
-- Norm Hochberg

"... the best thing that I recall has been the economy of wordage. Verbose statements are stripped to the essentials."

-- Buck Coulson.

"... enough comment hooks on each page to provide two pages of loc. TITLE is like sitting in the middle of a dozen people who know everything about everyone, all talking loudly enough for me to sop up all those remarks, and I don't dare doze off for even three seconds because I'll miss eight important facts."

-- Harry Warner, Jr.

(Over)

FANZINE FRIGASSEE (Continued) --

"It is like a great bonfire on a warm seashore, with a crowd of good folks around. Everyone brings little tidbits, hotdogs, potatoes to be baked in the hot stones, marshmallows, cans of beer in a barrel of ice. The gang sits and chats and laughs, and sometimes chases each other for the fun of it. Clouds race across a bright moon, which breaks through them to make faces silvery bright. It is perpetual youth and calm excitement, the stimulation of the others and one being a part of them all. And the host sits in near-anonymity among them, just one of the group, a silent and wise conductor of this orchestra of minds."

-- Ben Indick

So there you have it, that is TITLE. Honesty forces me to admit, however, that TITLE has lost some of its charm in the past year. I am not sure why this is. Other TITLERS who have said the same thing believe it is because of the increase in the number of articles, thus causing TITLE to lose some of its letterzine atmosphere. This is the same feeling I have had, but a perusal of this year's output reveals that there is still an enormous amount of material from letters. Possibly, TITLE has been lacking in the provocative, "off-trail" questions and ideas it once had. Or possibly, the large influx of new TITLERS this year has made the readership more strangers to each other than we once were.

Judging from readers' response, the three major items of the year were: a continuation, under the title of "Walker's Wake", of the argument over Paul Walker's gripes about faneds;

PREHENSILE #'s 11-13, 13.5 -- Edited by Mike Glycer (319 Pike St., Bowling Green, OH 43403) & Mile Stevens (14535 Saticoy #105, Van Nuys, CA); available for 50¢, LoC, contrib, or trade to both editors.

Mike Glycer has admitted that PRE is modeled after Geis's SFR. The formula is one that I have always held as the ideal for genzine publishing. PRE

"Attack of the Human Bems", by Eric Mayer, about the lack of truly alien aliens in SF; and my own "Am I Hearing Things, Or Is That a March They're Playing?", which Donn said drew the heaviest response in the history of TITLE.

Richard S. Shaver has continued to appear in TITLE. Frederic Wertham, in #24, had an hilarious compilation, called "Yin & Yang", of quotes from reviews of The World of Fanzines. #32 had a good interview of Claire Beck, one of the great BNF's of the '30's, who is now a TITLER.

Fiction occasionally appears in TITLE. Paul Walker's "Is There a God, financially speaking?" and Eric Mayer's "Menace" both got some favorable response.

During the year, three columns have been added to the zine: Dave Rowe's "From the Safety of this Col", which is about fan activities in England, and two fanzine review columns. Although I like Rowe's column, it is not the sort of thing that is suited to TITLE. I would rather see it in some newszine. Likewise with the fanzine reviews--they take up room that I would rather see devoted to readers' comments. Warren Johnson's "Zine Scene" was discontinued when he gafiated, and was replaced by Eric Mayer's "The Raised Eyebrow", which I have not yet seen enough of. I have seen too much of Mike Gorra's "The Dissecting Table", which fails because of Gorra's prejudices, and because, by his own admission, he loves to write nasty reviews.

has a balance between serious, critical material and light, faanish material; it has book reviews that are both extensive and high in quality; and it has a long, argumentative lettercolumn which is often enriching.

PRE #11 has one of my favorite fanzine pieces of 1974, Lou Stathis' "Goodbye, Mr. Stathis". This is an

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FANZINE FRICASSEE (Continued) --

account of an SF talk that Lou was bamboozled into giving to an elementary school class. The great strength of this piece lies in the achingly realistic descriptions of the school and the kids. It is a very slick piece of writing which cannot fail to strike a responsive chord in all who attended elementary school in an old, disintegrating, red-brick building. But I will let Lou speak for himself:

"The stairways were as I remembered them, cages of thick steel mesh and foggy safety glass, but the red handrails had been lowered to knee level. The hallways were narrow, still painted in the old institutional gray-green and echoed with the moronic bellows of cultured young mouths. On the walls were faded old prints (the same faded old prints...) of unpolluted pastoral scenes, paired with artfully slopped stick figures with huge smiles and inch-thick hairs."

Mike Glyer has a long Torcon report which is the best I have seen. This, on top of his LACon report last year, establishes Mike as the best author of conreports that fandom has had since Jay Kay Klein.

The first two installments of Mike Glicksohn's fanzine review column, "The Zineophobic Eye", appear in #11 and #12. Many fanzine reviewers

SF ECHO #'s 19-21 -- From Ed Connor, 1805 N. Gale, Peoria, IL 61604; for \$1, 3/\$2, or the usual.

SF ECHO continues in its unique format as a mimeographed book. Although the lettercolumn is still long and contains small portions of commentary from a large number of writers, it is not as tightly edited as it has been in previous years. In 1974 the lettercol had many of the "I like it" type of comments, something that never appeared before in this zine. Nevertheless, it is still one of the most interesting lettercols around.

have the insight and writing ability to write fine columns if they only took the time to comment in detail, but they do not. Mike does take the time, and so the result is one of the best fanzine review columns I have ever read. Also, as Harry Warner has observed, "One fortunate thing is Mike's lack of preoccupation with any particular aspect of fanzines."

PRE #13 is a special issue commemorating the 50th anniversary of LASFS and the 10th anniversary of APA-L. For any fan interested in fan history, this issue is a treasure trove of information, and for those not interested in fan history it is still entertaining.

The issue starts off just right with a survey of LASFS history by Milt Stevens. Then other articles fill in the details of specific eras. T. Bruce Yerke's "Memoirs of a Superfluous Fan" details the 1930's, "1956 Memoir" by Ted Johnstone gives a good picture of the late 1950's, and Harry Warner discusses the great LASFS fanzines in "The City in Ditto". "The APAlling Truth" by Jack Harness gives a thorough account of fandom's greatest weekly apa. Sprinkled like diamonds throughout the zine are reprints by Tom Digby (one of fandom's most humorous writers) from his APA-L zine, PROBABLY SOMETHING.

SF ECHO also has one of the best book review columns. It covers a large number of both major and minor works, with both short and long reviews by Ed Connor, Don Ayres, Eddy C. Bertin, and others. One of the outstanding reviews of the year in any fanzine was Kenneth Faig's review of The Bram Stoker Bedside Companion in #20. This piece is more of a critical article than a review, and contains bibliographic material on Stoker which is invaluable to any horror fan.

For my money, the most interesting fanzine item of the year is the results

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FANZINE FRICASSEE (Continued) --

of Paul Walker's "Unpopularity Poll" (in #19), which asked questions like "What is the worst SF novel by your favorite author?" This poll is ideal for anyone, like myself, who values communication in fandom above everything else, because reading the responses here (each one quoted individually) is like conversing with 25 other fans about SF.

Paul Walker continues his fine series of author interviews with one of Bloch, in #20, and one of Aldiss, in #21. The Bloch interview is very good, and complements rather than repeats the one by Randall Larson in The Robert Bloch Fanzine. The Aldiss review seems the least successful that Paul has ever conducted, but I don't know why.

SELDON'S PLAN #'s 34-36 -- Edited by Cy Chauvin, published by Wayne Third Foundation, Box 102 SCB, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202; available for 75¢, 5/3 or the usual.

It seems that fandom has lost a superb sercon writer, while gaining a superb fanzine editor. SELDON'S PLAN was formerly an inferior, little-known clubzine, but under Cy Chauvin's editorship three fine issues were published in 1974. One of them, #34, is among the two or three best single issues of any fanzine published in 1974.

The best article in #34 is "A Look at Bierce and Lovecraft", by Al Azif. I expected the article to be merely a tired reworking of familiar materials concerning the well-known fact that Lovecraft was heavily influenced by Bierce. Instead, the article is both a highly perceptive and original comparison of two stories, which proves to be very illuminating for any discussion of the ideals and mechanics of supernatural fiction. This is required reading for all horror fans.

In #19 Don Ayres has a Torcon report which, although it doesn't reach the heights of Mike Glycer's, is still very fine. In the same issue, Phil Farmer takes a long, remarkably objective look at Heinlein's Time Enough for Love.

The third of Doug Leingang's fan interviews appears in #20, with Donn Brazier as the subject. It is good as far as it goes, but suffers acutely from brevity. Also in #20, Walt Liebscher shows once again why he is one of our best faanish writers with "The Fabulous Showboat", another hilarious parody of the Riverworld novels.

Gene Mierzejewski has a review, in #34, of Heinlein's Time Enough for Love, which is by far the best of the many that have been done on the book. Mierzejewski sets forth an interesting theory (which I think is valid), which attributes Heinlein's decline to Stranger in a Strange Land. He then traces this decline to date, and shows how Heinlein's latest novel relates to its predecessors.

#34 also has a reprint of "Sensationalism in Science Fiction" by Stewart Kemble. This is a plea for more literary values in SF, which, though hardly original, is nicely stated. Cy Chauvin has an in-depth review of Dying Inside which is a good example of a critic so enamoured by his own pet theory that his perception is thus grossly distorted.

The best aspects of #35 are all reprints: the cover by Steve Fabian, "The Science in Science Fiction" by James Blish, and "Brunner & Lovecraft: A Comparison in Fantasy" by Joe Sanders.

The speech by Blish is an easy subject, adequately handled in a general-

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FANZINE FRICASSEE (Continued) --

izing manner. It contains, however, one major procedural flaw in its criticism of psi powers. Blish uses experimental data to arrive at the conclusion that psi powers are impossible. Yet, he overlooks the fact that if his conclusion is correct, then it is impossible for the data upon which the conclusion is based to exist.

Joe Sanders' article is an instructive comparison of two different approaches to fantastic fiction. It

THE ALIEN CRITIC #'s 8-11 -- Quarterly, from Richard Geis, POBox 11408, Portland, OR 97211; for \$1.25, 4/\$4, or 8/\$7.

There is little that I can say about TAC that has not already been said by others. Rereading these issues, I am disappointed in the amount of good sercon material present. The issues do not hold up well upon re-reading. Only in a year like 1974 could this selection of material place a zine fifth on my list.

There has always been a large number of vampiric fans who relish lapping up the blood spilled in fanzine feuds, and so I leave to them the Herrison-White scrap and the Geis-Coney-Russ-McIntyre quadrangle about women's lib, both in #8.

Most of the material in these issues is froth, at times entertaining, but still froth. The best of this kind of material is "Dear Lisa, Have Just Cleaned My Typewriter Which Was a Wild and Stupid Thing to Do" by Ted Tubb, in #10, which is about the tribulations of a Tired Old Author. TAC has also brought us two Robert Bloch speeches from Torcon. The banquet speech in #8 is filled with his good humor, and the GoH speech in #10 is more serious, but neither is of much importance. Sam Merwin, in #'s 9 and 10, has reminiscent articles about his days as editor for THRILLING WONDER. Both offer little to a knowledgeable fan.

will leave you wanting to read The Traveler in Black immediately, if you have not already read it.

#36 has an interview with Greg Benford which is sure to spark the reader's interest in that author's work. The only other major items in this issue are two very good retrospective reviews by Cy Chauvin, of Davy and The SF Hall of Fame.

In #10, Daniel Say has a long, detailed interview with Stanislaw Lem. The interview provides much background material on Lem and reveals the full extent of Lem's Communist-inspired criticism of Western SF. A much poorer interview is the one with Avram Davidson by Richard Geis. It is short and undetailed, but since I knew nothing about Davidson, I learned a lot from it.

"Reading Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei & Cory Panshin, in #9, is a semi-Freudian analysis of Heinlein's works. I take a dim view of this sort of word games, and apparently other fans do as well, for the reader response to the article was not very favorable. The worst part of the article is where the authors spend thousands of words laying a foundation, which is a hash of psychological theory, for their analysis.

Richard Delap has a lengthy survey of "Sex and Science Fiction" in #8, which I suppose is of interest to someone. "The Foundation on Sands", by John J. Alderson, in #11, is a fine discussion of the political and historical foundations of Asimov's "Foundation" series, which leaves the series in a shambles.

The strongest points in TAC's favor are the large number of fine letters, and the book reviews. The reviews are extensive, and cover the entire spectrum of types from "buyer's guide" quickies

(Over)

FANZINE FRICASSEE (Continued) --

to those with illuminating critical commentary.

NEXT COLUMN: I will review the second five of my top ten.

FANZINE FRICASSEE REVISITED

Guest Cook, Norbert Spehner

(Translated from the French by Jim Goldfrank, from REQUIEM I:4)

QUARBER MERKUR #38 -- Special LEM (Stanislaus and Lunar Excursion Module) issue. Editor: Franz Rottensteiner, A-2762 Ortman, Felsenstrasse 20, Austria. Distributed & Published by Hans Joachim Alpers, D-285 Bremerhaven 1, Weissenburgerstrasse 6, Federal Republic of West Germany. Cost: 3 marks/issue.

Charles Fort, the collector of strange facts, would have loved the coincidence! I have had at home for more than four years a copy of Solaris (Stanislaus Lem). So, the other day, I decided to read this classic that I had heard so much spoken of... Excellent novel... And, strange coincidence, the next day the postman brought #38 of QUARBER MERKUR, devoted entirely to Lem. Bruce Robbins, who has German roots like me, tells me that Q.M. is certainly the best fanzine in the world! That's the least

one can say... 100 pages of single-spaced typed text... enough reading for a whole day, with known collaborators like Brian Aldiss, Robert Plank... texts of an academic level... a magazine worthy of being in the best SF libraries. In #38 there is a full photo of Lem on glossy paper, an exhaustive bibliography of almost all the works of this author, published in Polish and German as well as translations in other languages. I can only express my admiration before the titanic work of Franz Rottensteiner, also well known for his contributions to many magazines such as SF STUDIES or EXTRAPOLATION, and I needn't continue.... For me who reads German fluently, it was a royal treat. Q.M. has been appearing for 12 years... what more can one say?

((We're hoping for more from Norbert on Q.M. for future TWJ's. -- ed.))

YE OLDE EDDE'S FAVORITE FANZINES OF '74

Our ten favorites of those fanzines which appeared more than once in '74 (and which we have seen--we've never seen RENAISSANCE, e.g.) are (in alphabetical order): DARK HORIZONS (Br. Fantasy Society), FANTASIAE (The Fantasy Assoc.), IT COMES IN THE MAIL (Brooks), KARASS (Bushyager), MYTHOLOGIES (D'Ammassa), NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPT. (Quane), SELDON'S PLAN (Chauvin), THE S.F. ECHO (Connor), TITLE (Brazier), YANDRO (the Coulsons). ZIMRI (Conesa) & GRANFALLOON (Bushyager) would have made it had they appeared more frequently. Top five semi-prozines were: AMRA (Scithers), ALGOL (Porter), SFWA BULLETIN (Zebrowski), THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE (Hubin), VIEWS & REVIEWS (Tuska); too infrequent were: FOUNDATION (Nichols), GORE CREATURES (Svehla), NEW CAPT. GEORGE'S WHIZZBANG (VBO), RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY (Sapiro), UNICORN (Rockow). Honorable mentions: Fanzines: BREAKTHROUGH (Bitman), DONO-SAUR (Thompson), DYNATRON (Tackett), DIEHARD (Cvetko), GODLESS (Arthurs), KYBEN (Smith), LAUGHING OSIRIS (?), MAYBE (Koch), MYSTERY*FILE (Lewis), PREHENSILE
(Cont. pg. L-11)

I. Re TWJ #84.

Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Dr., East
Providence, RI 02914. (3/2/75)

Richard Delap is, as usual, perceptive and demonstrates excellent taste. This means, of course, that he and I agree on most of what he has written. The notable exception is the work of Ernest Taves, whom he finds outstanding. Taves has beaten the same basically mediocre story of astronauts on the moon refusing to follow instructions until it is black and blue from head to foot. A bigger literary crime, in my book anyway, is that he has made the moon almost as lifeless in a literary sense as it is in actuality. Ah well, even Richard can't always be right. I can at least chortle devilishly, because I have a copy of the elusive Way Out edited by Elwood.

Bonnie Dalzell's portfolio is excellent, but Don's right--it should have been printed on one side only.

Dave Weems overrates The Fall of Colossus. Jones has always been at his best in his plotting and verisimilitude. This latest bit of trivia completely breaks the mold. Having written himself into a corner by creating Colossus too all-powerful, he invokes disincorporate Martians. It's the cop-out of all cop-out endings, and his attempt to reverse himself at the end by making the Martians into organic versions of Colossus broke me up into hysterical laughter.

Barry Gillam and I don't agree much about books either. Laumer's The Glory Game is utter drivel, an insult to our intelligences. The idea that a single human being can consistently be not only a better judge of the political situation than his government, but also able to personally intervene successfully on two occasions to save humanity from the evil Hukks is a bit hard to swallow. Even more annoying is Laumer's apparent belief that it is perfectly all right for an

individual to inflict his will on the entire race, so long as he's right. Of course he turns out to be right in Laumer's novel, because Laumer is controlling the situation. But in real life, he'd probably have provoked a needless war.

Herovit's World, contrarily, did not strike me at all as an indictment of the world of SF per se. Malzberg is trying to show the perversion of our individual self-images that occurs when we sacrifice what we believe in for economic or social reasons. Herovit should have tried to write serious fiction, Malzberg says, even if it lost him his wife and ended with his starvation. He even implies that such would not have been the case, that his wife would have had more respect for him because he would have had more respect for himself. And remember, Herovit was originally a rather good writer. Turning out endless volumes of pap destroyed his talent.

Malzberg is constantly attacked as a downbeat, pessimistic writer. On the contrary, I find his stories to be predominantly upbeat, though perhaps not obviously so. Malzberg seems to be saying that the human spirit is capable of anything, so long as we are willing to dedicate ourselves to that accomplishment. Our failure is not because we are incapable of achieving greatness, but because we too often sacrifice what we know is right because it is inconvenient or uncomfortable. His stories are clearly admonitory, but the fact that no one seems to recognize them as such--rather than indicating his inability as a writer--seems to me to substantiate his point.

Darrell Schweitzer's letter is so thoroughly right, I can add nothing except emphasis.

(Over)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

Jim Goldfrank, 10516 Edgemont Dr.,
Adelphi, MD 20783. (3/2/75)

THE WSFA JOURNAL "continues to amaze". It contains more wordage than the average paperback novel, and contains more quality writing. Richard Delap's commentary is not only authoritative and comprehensive, but stands on its own as good writing and enjoyable reading. His review of Again, Dangerous Visions proves not only his critical ability but, to me, his strong stomach.

Speaking of stomachs, perhaps I should have counted to ten before I wrote that pure gut-reaction letter about Harlan Ellison. That's where it hit me. That's where I responded from. I believe I was reacting to what I used to be before my ten years with a psychiatrist. I don't like being reminded of it.

Still, I saw Harlan Ellison's antics at Discon II. So many blistering obscenities came over the p.a. system that I'm surprised the wires didn't fuse. How can a person who makes a profession of offending others be so thin-skinned? I feel that I was singled out from among the many readers who reacted to Harlan Ellison in the #83 lettercolumn because I hit uncomfortably close to home. Takes one to tell one? I used to be like that in all save his genius.

Make no mistake, he is a genius. A question arose in a conversation at Discon: "Would a healthy Harlan Ellison be as great?" The reply was: "Greater." Meanwhile, I hope he will be somewhat mollified by my sincere comments about his mechiah of a story "I'm Looking for Kadak". Dhalom, Harlan.

Richard Delap, 10114 S. Broadway,
Wichita, KS 67211. (15/2/75)

Sometimes I wonder if the hours of the day rush by as quickly as they seem to, or is it just me, forever be-

hind schedule and regularly shriveling up into a little ball of tensions and anxieties. Perhaps I just try to do too much. I've returned to working full-time, while trying to keep up with a variety of fanzine projects, a book for Ellison, and the new library journal. I also just finished a very short story for F&SF, which Ferman bought, and a book column, which Ferman may buy. I'd discard sleep entirely if I thought I could get away with it, but...sigh, oh, well....

I just wanted to stop here and give a few comments on TWJ #84. As I mentioned before, I was astounded by the amount of material you had used in this issue. Weems' funny illo (p. 16) is probably a very real protest-- poor man, he must think I'm chained to a typewriter (sometimes I think I'm chained to it).

Time to point out a few errors, however. Weems has reproduced my writing fairly accurately, though he does have a tendency to drop words here and there which makes some sentences ambiguous, or, worse, senseless. I usually try to check for errors before I send something in to you, and while I'm sure I miss a few, I don't think they're quite as numerous as the final version copy makes it appear. This is not any sort of angry criticism directed to Weems, understand; after seeing some of my work in other fanzines, Weems' work is positively gratifying. However, on p. 27 he incorrectly credits F&SF with the publication of Michael Bishop's "Death and Designation Among the Asadi", when in fact it was published in IF. (I think this is Weems' mistake, and as I'm too lazy to dig out my carbon copy, I'll assume my original work was correct and scream about Weems' careless copying (scream*scream*scream)-- if the mistake was mine, then I'll only scream about Weems' not correcting it (scream*scream*scream).)

(Cont. next page)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

. . . The most annoying transcription error occurs on page 83, where Weems transcribes my sentence as follows: "Larry Niven's Protector is mistitled The Protector, its publication credited to Random House rather than Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and/or Ballantine....". This is a deliberate insertion of an error, for my original copy read "credited to Random House rather than Ballantine". Harcourt Brace Jovanovich had nothing to do with the book, and I don't know where Weems got the idea nor why he inserted it into the review. Random House now owns Ballantine, but Ballantine published this book before the takeover and published it as an original paperback. There was no hardcover edition by anyone! So if you get any complaints on my carelessness over this, please clarify the origin of this error. (It's especially embarrassing because it occurs in the midst of my assault on another writer for his careless research.)

I will be interested in hearing what kind of remarks you receive from readers re the AD,V review, if any.

Another error, p. 117: "Tak Hallus", not Ted Hallus"....

And after all my complaining and bitching, I think the issue was beautiful.' (How could I not think so, with all my own work taking up a hefty number of pages.) . . . Good book reviews--I especially liked Trina King's review of The Crystal Skull, much longer and more informative than my own--and a fine lettercolumn (but much too short).

((The people who do the best work are always the busiest, as they're the most in demand.... Dave doesn't know how the errors you mentioned crept into the issue, either--he was particularly puzzled by the Protector insertion.... (We've simply got to come up with a better system of proof-reading for TWJ--errors always slip by when one proofs one's own material, no matter how careful one is....) ##

You're reading all the remarks re the A,DV review in this much-too-brief lettercolumn. It seems that there is an inverse relationship between the effort one puts into an issue (or an excellent piece of work like your review) and the reader feedback response to it.... (Also, large issues seem to draw less of a response than smaller issues. This issue will be half the size of #84, and nowhere near as handsome in appearance, so we should draw appreciably more response.... --ed.))

Jodie Offutt, Funny Farm, Haldeman,
KY 40329. (8/5/75)

You never know when you'll pick up a fanzine of the most sercon sort and find a recipe inside. Weird. Funny thing--I think I'm a pretty good cook (I ought to be, I've been at it long enough) and enjoy planning meals and company dinners, snacks, but dislike baking bread. I make muffins, bisquite, icings, pie crust and cookies from scratch, but cakes, bread and gravies come out of packages.

Some things are just as good out of a package, or I don't enjoy making them, or they're too much trouble.

The JOURNAL is a beautifully put together book. How could anybody LoC it properly?

* * * * *

II. Re SOTWJ #183/184.

Harlan Ellison, Sherman Oaks, CA.
(10/5/75)

I'm appalled that you would permit as unprofessional and wholly indefensible a review as that by Dave Weems (of The Second Experiment by J.O. Jeppson) to appear in your fanzine.

Understand something: I have not read Janet Jeppson's book, nor am I quibbling with Mr. Weems' evaluation of it on literary grounds. He may well be correct.

(Over)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

Understand something else: I am frequently critical of those anthologists who include Isaac's lesser current stories in "best" collections, merely to exploit his name, while at the same time denying Isaac the constructive whiplashing he needs to make him write at the top of his form. (I mention this as some sort of unnecessary credential that I am neither in the employ of Isaac Asimov nor one of his mind-slaves.)

But Weems' review is no review. He says nothing about the book, nothing about its content, the caliber of thought, or even specifics as to style of writing. In point of fact, he never even bothers to state if it's a novel or non-fiction. His entire complaint is that it was written by Isaac's wife, and offers as cause for umbrage some conversation he eavesdropped on, when it is clear from the cover copy he quotes that care was taken by the publisher not to capitalize on the Asimov name.

Panning a bad book is unquestionably a necessary act of criticism, but this attack is neither review nor criticism. It is fan gossip of the nastiest sort. Weems applauds Geis and Lupoff, who may or may not have done what needed to be done, but indulges in rant and innuendo himself rather than soberly and critically reviewing the book itself.

That you label this wretchedness a "special review" is only one more indication that as an editor you opt for empty sensationalism rather than solid content. Assuming Houghton Mifflin published this book because Janet Jeppson is Isaac's wife, is a far cry from being able to prove it; and I, for one, consider what you and Weems have done an act of total irresponsibility. You bring discredit to yourselves and to the group that sponsors you. An apology is the barest minimal action you should take to rectify an unethical action.

As I've said to you before, if you cannot acquire the reviewing services of literate and informed writers, then pack away your mimeograph and stop littering mailboxes with legally actionable copy. You commit the same stupid mistakes over and over, and seem hellbent on continuing until some professional or group of professionals grow angry enough to thumb you out of existence.

For your own sakes, and for the sake of those you malign, I urge you to desist this practice; and find some other line of work for Mr. Weems. As a critic, he is a dandy garbage collector.

((Dave's piece was written as an editorial for his column in TWJ, and then when TWJ was delayed, he gave it to us with a bunch of reviews to go into SOTWJ. In undue (and unthinking) haste to get out #183/184, realizing it was not a review, but having no place left in that issue but the review section, we labelled it a "special review" to set it off from the real reviews. Unfortunately, that was the worst choice of words we could have made, as that implied it was an "extra-special" review rather than a non-review. We should have labelled it a "guest editorial". or, somesuch.... So the fault is ours, not Dave's, and we apologize to everyone concerned for our editorial gaffe. (We've simply got to slow down a bit more....) --ed.))

Edward Wood, 873 Tower Ave., Hartford, CT 06112. (10/5/75)

I think I'm a bit peeved with that so-called special review by Dave Weems in SOTWJ-183/3. It was not a review, it was a diatribe. Even Mrs. Asimov is entitled to be told why the book is a bad book and what disturbed the reviewer about it. The reader is told to read another book review by another reviewer in another magazine. What in hell are we subbing to SOTWJ

(Cont. next page)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

for? To be told to read THE ALIEN CRITIC??? Do you just print anything that comes in or is there any editing at all in SOTWJ? And you wasted a whole page to do it!

. . . These various reviewers of de Camp's biography of Lovecraft really get to me. They all seem to believe that Lovecraft was some sort of failure. On the contrary, the man lived the way he wanted to live. He did the things he wanted to do. He wrote a number of stories, some good, some bad, some superb. We find that he married, traveled, worked hard on various literary enterprises, wrote an astonishing number of letters to good friends and is remembered after his death by an ever-increasing number of readers. So he did not reap the literary rewards of an Ellison or a Silverberg or an Asimov. These people too have their particular hangups and are we going around, moaning poor ____ or poor ____? I think Lovecraft was a much more successful person than the bulk of the human race. His faults only make him that much more human and show us what difficulties the human spirit can surmount. Anybody who wants to look down or pity Lovecraft should be prepared to answer a very simple question: HAVE YOU DONE MORE?!

Dick Geis, POBox 11408, Portland, OR 97211. (12/5/75)

Thanks for the kind words re the Lupoff review and such, but it took no courage at all to run.

I must compliment you on your continuing to publish an "archives" much more complete than any I would care to publish, and for keeping it up year after year.

((Thanks for kind comment re SOTWJ. Sometimes we wonder if continuing to publish all that "archives"-type info is really worth the effort--it's nice to hear that someone finds it of value! (As long as SOTWJ continues separately from TWJ, and people continue to send us info, we'll keep on going. But we'll have to cut back if/when SOTWJ and TWJ are combined.) --ed.))

III. Re Other SOTWJ's (the rest of the SOTWJ lettercolumn, which was deferred to TWJ when SOTWJ reverted to a smaller size).

Robert Smoot, Three Churches, WV 26765. (16/2/75)

I especially liked your inclusion of film reviews from WASHINGTON STAR and WASHINGTON POST. Hearing various reviews from various views helps one obtain a rounded-out view of a film (or of anything, for that matter) that one may not have had the opportunity to see or may not get to see.

Did you see War & Peace, as shown on WTOP-TV? Few stations would invest seven hours over two days for a single film, even a classic of this magnitude (three cheers for commercialism!). And what film could surpass W&P? The scale used is in step with the magnitude of the theme. Cinematography and editing astound. Borodeno used 128,000 extras, just a few thousand persons more than the actual casualty totals for that battle. Panoramic shots from boom cranes, along extra-high ceilings, and from airplanes are needed to incorporate all the characters in ballroom and battlefield.

If anyone were to make a grab at high political office, three books I'd recommend he be familiar with are All the King's Men (Warren), Guns of August (Tuchman), and War and Peace (Tolstoy).

So far I've read seven books this calendar year, and that's good for me. In the Shadow of Man is a splendid work by Jane von-Lawick Goodall--a perfect combination of human interest, good literature (save occasional misplaced modifiers), and scientific study. Conondrum, by Jan (formerly James) Morris, is the most boring piece I've read for a while. The subject is transexualism, and the treatment is hogwash. Many details are deliberately omitted, and the bulk of the remaining data is hodge-podge. The few interesting passages are not worth the effort needed to wade through the book.

(Over)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

All the King's Men is vivid and thoughtful, and the need for disciplined political morality is never clearer. Haunted New England by Mary Bolte is a lusciously illustrated collection of New England witch- and ghost-lore. Several tales are true goose-pimplers, and highly recommended for late-night fright. Hiroshima by John Hershey is brief, and a well-pieced recollection of the experiences of several survivors of the atomic blast. I've a weak spot for documentary-affairs, especially those including the subjective viewpoint. Movie Magic is John Brosnan's history and description of the techniques that make illusion reality. Fascinating stills and good reading. The Missing Link is Vol. 1 on the Time-Life series on the evolution of Homo sapiens. Recounts the evidence for man's evolution, and describes many thought-provoking theories.

I've seen a total of 27 films so far this calendar year. Some of the more interesting of fantasy-noteworthy ones are:

* * Missing Are Deadly ('75) -- ABC made-for-TV and drags down Nimoy. The title is absolutely correct when the "missing" are credibility and skill. Blah!

*** Journey to the Far Side of the Sun ('69) -- Is overdramatized and often childish, but the premise of an identical-but-reversed Earth opposite us on the other side of Sol is played delicately.

**** Julius Caesar ('70) -- Has a cast of so many stars you could throw a dart anywhere and hit one of them. Charlton Heston as Antony makes the speech over Caesar's body a classic. His is probably the only consistently good acting job herein. Is an intelligent, colorful, and creditable film.

** Satan's Triangle ('75) -- Is a made-for-TV-er that, despite its wooden characters, builds some atmosphere and suspense.

**** Ugetsu ('53) -- Is the Japanese film on degeneration of characters. Set in feudal Japan, it captures the anguish of civil war and the mysticism

of an earthbound spirit. Is superb on any and all counts.

** Man with the Golden Gun ('74) -- Fails miserably. Underground assassin-lair scenes, the performance by a French midget, and a car chase are the only successful parts, while the rest of the film hangs onto celluloid. The goose that laid The Golden Gun laid one bad egg.

**** Charly ('68) -- Is intelligent and self-controlled. The premise of retard-to-genius-and-back-to-retard is played to the hilt. Robertson does a brilliant job as the title character.

*** Help! ('65) -- Was in a much-edited form when I saw it, and I'm sure much was lost. The climactic beach romp is classic.

* Scars of Dracula ('70) -- Is stupid, to put it simply. Nothing is going on except bedplay, and that can't hold a flic together.

** I, Monster ('71) -- I saw in a one-hour, much-interrupted timespot, so got but the shell of the egg (that which holds things together). Atmosphere, settings, and arrangement seem effective.

**** Count Dracula ('70) -- Is a marvelously atmospheric and chilling adaptation of the novel. Chris Lee does well in an intelligent vampyre role. Evil exudes from the frames.

**** Frenzy ('72) -- Is another Hitchcockian success. Did you note Alfred himself in the opening crowd scenes?

*** Legend of Lizzie Borden ('75) -- Is one of the few made-for-TV-er's I've liked. The documentary effect is commendable, because it has material to work with.

* Adventures of the Queen ('75) -- If I met Irwin Allen on the street today, I'd not give him the time of day.

((Now that is the type of letter we sorely wish more of our readers would write! (And we hope Robert will bring us up to date from when his letter was written....) So how about it, out there--let's hear from you! --ed.))

(Cont. next page)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

Jim Goldfrank, 10516 Edgemont Dr.,
Adelphi, MD 20783. (6/75)

Sometime back I wrote an article, and agonized whether to buy the Grant edition of Howard's People of the Black Circle for \$15. Just about the time I decided to take the plunge, TK Graphics announced that the book is already selling for twice its original price from booksellers who still have any copies. They state that A Witch Shall Be Born, illustrated by Alicia Austin, is available now at \$12. Tower of the Elephant, illustrated by David Ireland, will be available in July at \$12. Red Nails, illustrated by George Barr, is announced for August at \$15. These are investors' and collectors' items. Any member of either of these groups would do well to get their orders in. I only regret to say that they are priced beyond my willingness and capability to pay.

TK Graphics also lists a page of items by Garland Press @ eleven bucks. Most of these listed for less than a dollar in the good old days when paperback prices were still cheap. \$11 for hard-cover editions? Who could be that hard-up? I hope the readers will boycott those firms who seek to cash in on the popularity of SF by selling "classics" at outrageous prices. One item on the page that may be very well worth the reader's money is Lester del Rey's Science Fiction: 1926-1976, a critical history of SF selling for \$15.

Here is one I'm going to break down and buy. Publishers Central Bureau, Dept. 394, 1 Champion Ave., Avenel, NJ 07131 sometimes has some very good remainders. The book is Maxfield Parrish, item #152657, selling for \$12.98 / \$1 postage & handling (cover price \$25). It has 184 illustrations, 64 in full color, plus much text. Many of us were introduced to Parrish because Hannes Bok idolized him and drew many of his stylistic elements from him. Then we came to love Parrish for himself through reprint editions. I haven't seen the book yet, but think it is a good value for anyone who knows and loves the works of Bok &/or Parrish.

Nils Hardin, POBox 9660, St.Louis,
MO 63122. (20/6/75)

. . . Thanks for your review of the May issue [of XENOPHILE] and for the nice words. One or two points of clarification: the cover (front) on X/13 is credited, although somewhat obscurely I agree. Somewhere in the first paragraph or two of my own editorial remarks I mention that Donn Albright also did the cover (as well as the illustration for the Bradbury poem). The back cover is not credited. It is a bookmark (sans the printing) from some bookstore, ca. 1920's. Re X being a bit high-priced as adzines go, well, yes, I guess so, if it were just an adzine. Of course, you go on to explain that it is much more than an adzine, but the impression of high price is there. Actually, the bloody thing costs much more to produce and to mail (at first class rates) than it takes in. But, I am going to remedy that, since I can't continue it and lose money.

. . . Your search for a new title for SOTWJ (why?) is interesting, since, when I was thinking of starting XENOPHILE, the most difficult thing about beginning the mag. was deciding on what to call it! I finally settled on the putting together of two Greek combining forms which, to my knowledge, have not been so paired before. "Lover of the Strange" doesn't really say it, but it comes close. I've since thought of other names, but they escape me now. However, I've just discovered an Egyptian word, Aalu, which is the Egyptian Elysium. In Egyptian Mythology, Amenti was (or is) the region of the dead, a subterranean realm whither the sun descends; the soul entering Amenti was conducted by Anubis (a jackal god usually represented as a son of Osiris, who shared with Thoth the office of conductor of the dead to the judgement hall in Amenti where he weighed their hearts against the feather of truth and right) into the hall of Osiris, judged by the 42 judges, and either passed thence to Aalu, or was consigned to torment. Aalu, then, was
(Over)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

the dwelling place of the happy souls after death. Homer placed it on the western margin of the earth, Hesiod and Pindar in the Isles of the Blessed in the Western Ocean, and later poets placed it in the lower world. Aalu, or the Egyptian Elysium was, therefore, an abode of the dead; a place or state of great delight or happiness; a paradise. Now, after all that, I want to say that I intend to start a small bookstore in St. Louis in the not-too-distant future, and may well call it Aalu (pronounced Ah-loo), or Aalu Books, or Aalu Scientifantasy Books, or some-such. However, not only does the name itself have meaning in this context (a bookstore), it also begins with double "a" and is followed by an "l", which will put it first in the yellow pages under BOOKS: USED AND RARE. This is done for one reason. There is another book dealer in St. Louis (among not-too-many used book stores), whose name is Sam Amatin. . . But, he lists his name in the St. Louis Yellow Pages as A Amatin, with a BIG ad, "We buy collections, rare books, old comics, magazines, etc." The "A Am..." puts him first, of course. But Aalu will finally foil that and, with a little bit of luck, perhaps some hidden treasures for genuine collectors will come my way (for which I'll pay the owner a fair price. Amatin pays no more than 25¢ for any book!) That's a long way to a name, but I thought you might be interested, since I'm sure names have crossed your mind of late in searching for a new one.

((Yes, we were interested, and we think our readers may be too, so we're publishing your comments in the TWJ lettercol for their benefit. (Now all you have to do is pray that Sam Amatin doesn't change his entry to "A.A. Amatin"....) ## As for the "why" of the SOTWJ name-search: THE WSFA JOURNAL and SON OF THE WSFA JOURNAL were both formerly official organs of the WASH. S.F. ASSOC. (hence the "WSFA" in the titles). Neither is currently the WSFA o-o, and only TWJ is still associated with that organization. --ed.))

Daniel Say, Box 65583, Vancouver 12, BC, Canada V5N 5K5. (10/7/75)

Re #185/pg. 6. Don D'Amassa: Canadians would passibly accept the invasion since there are very few people who would actively engage in a resistance movement in any country. The book is a polemic by one of this country's radical Tories and so is intended to arouse some Canadians to some kind of a passion.

This kind of thing has been done frequently and is a common type of one-step-beyond-tomorrow SF in Canada. The Trudeau Papers by Ian Adams (McLelland & Stuart), In High Places by Arthur Hailey, and The Killing Ground by Bruce Powe (Peter Martin Associates) are a few others of this genre.

Did you read Exxoneration? That is of course the alternative and has a lot of breaks and the "stupidAmericans" image.

It may be trash but it does give some people a kick in the butt, which is what the author intended.

Read the Canadian Corner in the latest (July) issue of NATIONAL LAMPOON for a U.S. (but written by a Canadian) call for an invasion of Canada.

Also in #185 (there was a lot of Canadian content there), pg. 11: I also got a copy of REQUIEM #4 after you, Don Miller, mentioned an earlier issue. #4 was what they sent me. (May I say here that I find your fanzine reviews most interesting and use them all the time. I like the listing of the contents and titles (with explanations) of the articles in fanzines.)

Some comments on Mr. Goldfrank's review of REQUIEM.

I feel that Mr. Goldfrank may be mistaken (he should ask his wife) about some of the things.

The short-shorts by the editor of REQUIEM are dreadful puns and not atmosphere stories. "Maladie" (Sickness) (about 60 words) is about a ghost (le fantome) who gets ill because of the damp and ill places that he haunts. He gets more and more ill and thinner and

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FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

thinner (a maigrir...a maigrir) to such a point that he is only a shade/ghost (l'ombre) of himself. Here is where you are supposed to chuckle or something, possibly groan.

Another short was about Isaac Newton who invented the prism and (decouvert le spectre) discovered the spectrum (spectra=ghost). And this spectra haunted him and gave him some bad moments for it made him see colours. Groan, groan.

The Sleeping Beauty story is a play (I'll concede that it is also a mood piece) on the idea of "piercing eyes" (these eyes pierce two holes in the Prince Charming's heart, etc.).

The gougou is a self-deprecating definition and meant in the sense "known for his poor taste critical and literary outpourings/shit".

That kind of thing is quite common. I know a Quebecois who is always apologizing for liking Star Trek and much of the less literary/more adventuresome books.

Another pun in the form of "lu-brique" in the title.

The fanzine reviews mentioned a quote by an American living in Quebec and speaking English that QUARBER MERKUR was the best fanzine in the world. Norbert said that was or may be the least that one could say.

I'm surprised that F.T. (French Translator) didn't remark more on the love of French-speaking readership for Lovecraft and the numerous references to Lovecraft and the preference by many for him over what we would call mainstream-SF. Even France is this way. Possibly the old-hoary-chestnut theory would be brought out about the war and the invasion and occupation of France killed off the incentive for the Franco-phone SF reader when the American stories were so available to the French publishers at the very cheap foreign rates.

Among the reviews of the fanzine REQUIEM I was pleasantly surprised by the lack of political dogma that one encounters with French magazines and that the reviewers judged it on plausibility and treasure vs. junk values.

I don't think that REQUIEM marks the maturity of the French-Canadian reader or fan. It is the first, that I know of, fanzine from there and it provides a market, albeit non-paying, for stories. Encouragement of that length and that level of punning is a bad thing in my opinion, though. It is still a very in-thing. The movie notes (your F.T. forgot to mention those) are about Montreal cinemas and their language versions and cuttings. It is about 60 fans talking to one another through the medium of a junior college-subsidized fanzine. Production values are good but they have to go a long way before they can get beyond the, what might be called, high-school magazine level of the contents of REQUIEM. Other than the slick magazine NOUS there is no SF, either fiction or discussion, in Quebec.

They should be encouraged to rise up.

((The F.T. says he'll be responding to you, either directly or (hopefully) in the TWJ #86 lettercolumn. --ed.))

We Also Heard From:

Keith Justice (Rt. 3, Box 42, Union, MS 39365) -- A correction to your mention of UNIVERSE #2 in #188; the essay was an autopsy for The Planet of the Apes--the main point was that there was a great deal of inconsistency, ergo the title "Planet of Inconsistency". ## Thank you very much for your tolerance of my inexperience in publishing. You, at least, give me a little credit for what I am trying to do and don't spend so much time pointing out what I have not yet become. #4 will be expanded to 20 pages; but no price change. In fact, my aims are to eventually expand to 32 pages per month and lower my sub rate to \$7.50 per year. But this may take some time.

George Fergus (3341 W. Cullom Ave., Chicago, IL 60618) -- I wish Jim Goldfrank would stop doing all those laudatory reviews of stuff by authors like Lin Carter and Alan Burt Akers, who are
(Over)

FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

mediocre at best. Akers has been sufficiently demolished by Don D'Amassa's summary in SOTWJ 163 and 157, but Carter does so many things badly that it is difficult to know where to begin, even if one had the patience for it. Is it true that Lin will be finishing Tolkien's Silmarillion? (Ha Ha, Only Kidding)

((Lin says to thank you for the idea.... --ed.))

Guy M. Townsend (3313 Wooded Way, Jeffersonville, IN 47130) -- While in my early teens in the 'fifties I read two SF novels which impressed me deeply and I would like to read them again if I can find out their titles and the names of their authors. All that I remember about one of them is that it involved a sort of university of the universe at which each student developed his mental powers to the point that his final exam, so to speak, consisted of pitting his powers against the power of a star: if he snuffed out the star he graduated; if he did not, there was nothing

(Cont. next column)

left of him to graduate. The other dealt with telepathy. The only recollection I have of it is the final scene wherein the good guys and the bad guys fought it out in some desolate place. The bad guys had the usual unfair advantage, this time in the form of a bunch of zombie-like fellows whose minds were completely controlled by the b.g.'s. They were called, if I remember properly, "tin-cans". If any readers of TWJ or SOTWJ recognize either or both novels from these probably distorted recollections I would appreciate hearing from them. I realize that I run a considerable risk of being disappointed. A few months back I found a copy of Costigan's Needle in a used book store. I was beside myself with joy and anticipated a delightful evening re-reading one of my favorite SF novels from my teens. It was a bore. The concept was interesting still, but the style and execution were embarrassingly sophomoric and the ending was quite unbelievable. Perhaps I will experience a similar letdown with the two novels I am now trying to identify; I hope not.

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FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK REVISITED (Late Arrival) -- Re SOTWJ & TWJ #84 --

T.L. Bohman, POBox 14, E.Thetford, VT 05043. (26/7/75)

. . . The Burns, D'Amassa, and Goldfrank reviews in #185 were especially good and the joint review of The Aluminum Man prompted me to buy the book. Wooster is right about the cover; no wonder I missed it the first time around. Edmondson has a fine sense of humor and the rare talent of sustaining a spoof (which is how I read the novel) without being tedious. Ultimately it's sheer boredom which kills such put-ons as Harrison's Star Smashers novel and that Kilgore Trout thing that Farmer wrote for F&SF.

Incidentally, Don D'Amassa refers in his review of Wild Card to a 1959 novel by Agnew Bahnson. The author and book were new to me, but I seem to remember an even earlier use of that plot (late '40's? early '50's?) in a story by Ted Sturgeon called "Unite and Conquer".

For some reason, I don't enjoy prozine reviews as much as book or fanzine reviews. I read them when Richard Delap writes them. Most other critics I've read tend too much toward summarizing the plot; somehow, Delap knows how to be brief without being superficial.

The non-Delap material in THE WSFA JOURNAL #84 was generally quite good. The column I liked least was Beth Slick's TV wrapup. Really, now, what was I literate about The Horror at 37,000 Feet? And her comment about the excellent acting on the Star Trek cartoon baffles me. Acting? Sorry, I just couldn't buy it.

Of all the illos, I think Alexis Gilliland's cartoons were best. The spare line was expressive and the humor (?) was as sardonic as mine often attempts to be.

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FANSTATIC & FEEDBACK (Continued) --

Delap is clearly one of SF's best critics, pro or fan, and his forty-plus pages were a supreme treat even when--especially when--I disagreed with him. While I agree generally with his review of A, DV, what surprised me most of the second DV volume was simply that there were some good stories in it--the original DV was that bland. Like Delap, I continue to be puzzled at the waves DV created. The first volume was frankly a mediocre anthology and no more earthshaking than many of its forgotten predecessors. My guess is that DV did not go the way of such publications as the British NEW WORLDS simply because Ellison's publisher decided that they had sunk so much time and money into the project that, what the hell, they might as well push it and get some return on their investment. And the hype paid off. That it worked at all is, I suppose, a tribute to Ellison's energies.

On films, I have to admit that unlike Delap (and practically everyone

else I've talked to), I found the plot of Fantastic Planet so painfully simple-minded that I was never able to sit back and enjoy the movie. Westworld hit me in a totally different way--despite all its serious flaws, I enjoyed the movie as a grade B adventure flick. None of the reviews I've read, incidentally, mentions what I consider the central flaw in the plot: Why do the robots have lethal weapons? Why aren't their guns loaded with rubber bullets, or why don't they at least have the infra-red sensors on their weapons like those on the weapons of the resort guests? Well, there's no reason for it at all, except that the movie would run out of plot half-way through. Perhaps I enjoyed the flick because it was not quite as bad as I'd expected....

((Just read most of DV in SF class; didn't find much in it to recommend it... class spent disproportionate time on it, neglecting all of the older "classics".))

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YE OLDE EDDE'S FAVORITE FANZINES OF '74 (Cont. from pg. Z-6) --

(Glyer), SF&F/TV (Slick), TABEBULAN (Jenrettes), TIL THE COWS COME HOME (Stewarts); Semi-prozines: THE ALIEN CRITIC (Geis), ERB-DOM (Cazedessus), LOCUS (Browns), MOON-BROTH (Donaldson), OUTWORLDS (Bowers), QUARBER MERKUR (Rottensteiner), THRUST (U. of Md. S.F. club).

Would be very much interested in seeing list of your favorites....

-- DLM

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FLUX DE MOTS

A very short editorial this issue.... Once again, our attempt to pass on much of the time-consuming job of producing TWJ seems to have failed; the multi-editor set-up heralded in TWJ #84 seems to have gone sour already, with Bill Hixon moving, Dave Weems in the process of leaving the Army and resettling in job and habitat, and Wayne Piatt even busier than ever with his job. And the offset needs a new home before we can use it again. So...we've got TWJ back once again, hopefully for no longer than a couple of issues--but possibly for much longer than that.... ## Dave Weems is still functioning as Book Review Editor, so send all SF/Fantasy book reviews to him (address w/ToC). Alexis Gilliland is no longer Art Editor (new editor urgently needed). So--send all material other than SF/Fantasy book reviews to us. ## We'll continue with SOTWJ (news & info only) and WASHINGTON S.F. NEWS-LETTER (D.C.-area (i.e., within 250-mile radius) news & info) for the time being, but if we keep TWJ very much longer, SOTWJ and TWJ will have to be combined. THE MYSTERY NOOK will remain separate, regardless. ## No illos in this issue (as we said above, no Art Editor), and covers were scavanged from earlier issues (fc from #58 & bc from #68) (sorry about poor repro of fc). We need artwork, both offset & mimeo, and full-page offset for covers.... Help!

-- DLM

THE "STONED" PHILOSOPHER SAYS....

Some Thoughts on "Entropy".

According to Gibbs, the tendency of the universe is towards sameness, or chaos--in other words, towards "entropy". Life is a tendency towards order, through differentiation, etc.--therefore a reversal of entropy.

Nature tends towards disorder--i.e., the breaking down of one level into a lower level (e.g., the erosion of a rock into a lower form, the death of a star via burning itself out, etc.). In other words, nature tends to break things down into simpler forms or states, and the universe tends towards a state of ultimate simplicity where everything has broken down into one basic, simplest, primordial substance or element. This is the state of least organization, or "chaos".

Organization tends to create order, to create differentiated things out of sameness. Life tends towards diversity; from a common origin it branches outward into many diverse elements. Life is a process which takes disorganization in the form of simple, undifferentiated substances and organizes them into various and ordered things.

Chaos is a state of higher probability than organization. A lower, simpler level is more probable than a higher, more complex level; i.e., the wood molecule is of a more higher level of probability than the complex "chair".

Gibbs stated that chaos is a tendency towards a higher degree of probability in multiple universes--in other words, the occurrence will have a high degree of probability in a greater number of possible universes. One can easily see that an atom of a particular element has a higher degree of probability in several worlds (maybe Earth and Mars, e.g.) than a chair does in these same worlds. The probability that several such things as "chairs" exist in several different universes is much smaller than the probability that atoms of the element "carbon" exist in these same universes.

As one climbs the "abstraction ladder" probability decreases, and organization increases. Life tends to reach a higher level of abstraction on the ladder, to create more complex forms from simpler forms. But nature, "the great leveller" (including death, of course), tends to reduce higher forms on the abstraction ladder to lower forms, and thus to increase the probability of these forms, and also to approach "sameness", or "chaos".

Man tries, via his reason, to deduce the greater probabilities which govern the running of the universe, so that he might produce more organization, and thus--as is the goal of life--to "order" the disorganized elements into a pattern or system.

As the universe grows older and dies, sameness, disorganization, chaos results. One question: Will organization increase in these local, counter-entropic enclaves in which life exists, or will these, too, someday be levelled and returned to ultimate simplicity?

Do we have a dualism here, "life vs. entropy", or "life vs. nature"? Maybe these pockets of anti-entropy will increase until they "explode", and a new universe is created, which in turn will tend towards chaos and will ultimately produce pockets of anti-entropy, which will grow as the universe runs down, and ultimately produce a new universe, etc., etc., etc....

((Just a little anonymous contrib. we've had in our files for awhile. (Apologies to Jim Ellis for stealing your title; it's "stoned" as in "stoned thinking", etc.))

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