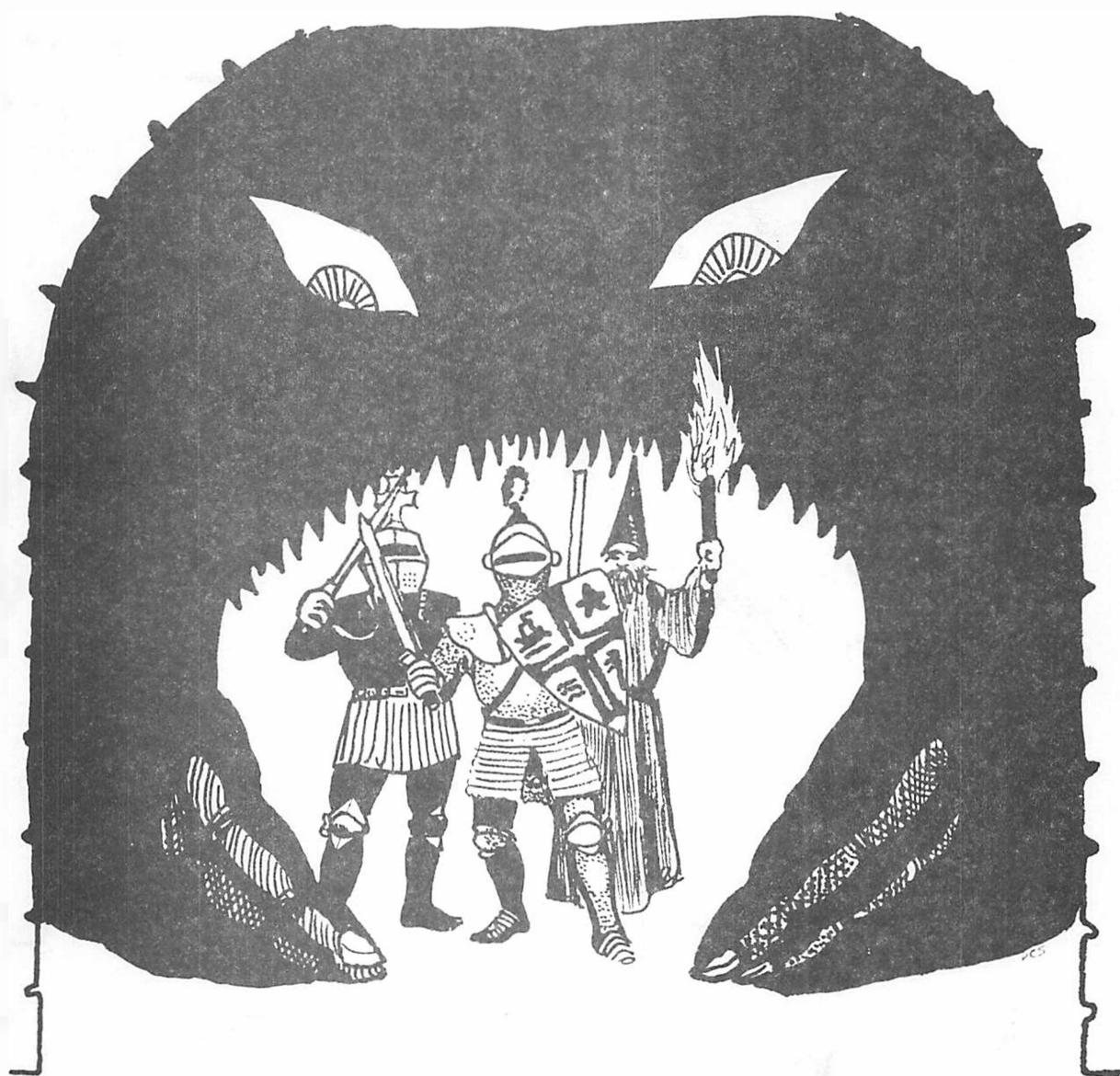


SF & F JOURNAL

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FLUX DE MOTS

As we type this on Feb. 22 (the last page to be typed, with only this and the ToC to be run off), thereby setting a new record for speed in getting out an issue of TWJ--only seven days between completion of #'s 86 and 87...! But this is not likely to happen again--it will be quarterly from here on out. This issue and #86 will be mailed out in the same envelope to most recipients, to save postage and time. They will be accompanied by a 16-page supplement to #86 (it is THE JOURNAL SUPPLEMENT #199, in case anyone cares, consisting of Richard Delap's reviews of the prozines for the last two months of 1974) and a 6-page supplement to #87 (THE JOURNAL SUPPLEMENT #200--an Index to Vol. 28 of SON OF THE WSFA JOURNAL (issues 163-168)). The only joker in the deck is that we still do not have the back cover for #87; this has been promised us this coming week, so if it arrives the packages should be mailed this coming weekend (Feb. 28-29); if not...well... we'll either have to hold the mailing a while longer or substitute the only thing we have on hand--some extra copies of Walt Simon's cover for the TWJ DATA SHEET.

As far as future issues are concerned--#88, the Jenkins/Leinster Memorial Issue, is still scheduled for May (it will count as two issues on subs--it's a biggie...!); it will also have non-Leinster book reviews, fanzine reviews, and letters. Absolute deadline for material for the issue is 15 April, but we need to know no later than 1 April if you are sending anything (and its approx. length). #89 is scheduled for August. We still need book reviews and tributes of Leinster for the Leinster section of #88; and we need lots of material on Asimov, Aldiss, and Borges and their works for the coming sections on these authors. (Speaking of Asimov, he has consented to an interview-by-mail. We are looking for questions a bit different than those which usually get asked at interviews--which will be interesting for him to answer and for our audience to read. Any suggestions would be greatly welcome (as soon as possible, please).) Leinster back cover also needed.

This issue consists of a large dosage of material returned from our former co-editors during the past couple of months, plus new material. The former is now just about used up, and we are consequently just about caught up (so keep the contributions coming....). The offset material was typed when we got it, so we were not able to edit it; we found a few typos in it, but they are obvious so we'll not bother with an errata sheet this time. Note that mentions of possible Hugos for Note in the review section refer to 1975, and not this year. (Please be sure to send all reviews to us; Dave Weems will not be able to serve as Book Review Editor until he leaves the Army; reviews sent elsewhere will only delay their publication....)

Thanks to all of you who bore with us during the hectic past couple of years while we were almost constantly retrenching in order to accomodate the restrictions imposed upon us by our eye trouble/surgery. Hopefully, things have settled down now, and we've found an arrangement we can handle. ## Oh, yes...on the name-change: we have no way to get to WSFA meetings, so our WSFA membership has lapsed; as a non-member, it would be inappropriate to use "WSFA" in the title. Hence, the change.

THE SF&F JOURNAL is quarterly, with occasional double-issues. Single-issues are \$1.25 in the U.S., \$1.50 elsewhere. Subscriptions are 4/\$4.00 in the U.S., 4/\$5.00 elsewhere. Its news & advertising supplement, THE SF&F NEWSLETTER, is monthly, and 30¢ ea., 4/\$1 1st-class U.S. & seamail overseas (mailed 2-at-a-time to traders); air-mail rates on request. TSJ is mailed book-rate, in envelopes. Ads in SFN only (2¢/35-character line for classifieds, \$2/printed side preprinted flyers (min. 200 needed); reduced rates for subbers/traders (see #86). Trades as arranged. Contributors get issue in which their material appears or have issue added to sub, as appropriate. In Address Code on envelope, subs are shown by "W" followed by # of last issue on sub; an "X" indicates that this is the last issue on your sub. -- DLM

The World of Filksongs, with a Look At the HOPSFA Hymnal

by James Goldfrank

TSJ-87/A-1

Many fans read, correspond, write for publication, or publish in a solitary manner. It is only the fan who goes to parties, clubs, and cons who is acquainted with the filksong. He knows the pleasure and enjoyment that group singing can bring. Since the togetherness feeling of a group sing resembles the similar feeling of participation one may have in a church or synagogue, it is not surprising that collections of filksongs are entitled hymnals.

What is a filksong? How did it get such a silly name? A filksong is a science fiction or fantasy *folk* song. Tamar Lindsay says that back in the mists of fannish time, some unsung hero assembled a collection of such folk songs, and made a typographical error . . . the name stuck. A filksong's music may be adopted from folk songs, popular music, or even hymnals. They are sometimes satires on fans and fan events; more often they satirize the literature: in sheer numbers, Tolkien songs as a single group seem to outnumber other groups. Sometimes a folk hero like Casey Jones is reincarnated as Spacy Jones. Sometimes a filksong is created by matching up existing poems and songs. Ned Brooks suggested that Carroll's "Jabberwocky" could be sung to "Greensleeves." Voila, a filksong! Try singing this combination, and you will find that it sounds great. When filksongs are satiric, they can be loving. They can also be intentionally nasty. The "Marching Song of Foofoo" states that Foofoo's legions will be victorious against the ghu and "Down with Wollheim, Wylie, Lowndes and Kornbluth too." This was sung at the 1940 Chicago Science Fiction Convention, and celebrates a fan feud of the time.

Incidentally, the filksong is not new with sf, only the name. The Scots poet Bobbie Burns wrote beautiful poetry, works of genius. Many of these became folks songs like "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton" or "Auld Lang Syne." But Burns set new words to many of his songs for his Chrochallan Fencible drinking club. These are uproariously dirty, and far less well known, but no less works of genius than the better-known songs: "in an' oot wi' diddle diddle, Tammy makes my tail toddle," and "Nine inch will please a lady." For more on these, refer to a book or record of "The Merry Muses of Caledonia."

So too, are there dirty filksongs, which tend to be funny rather than pornographic. I haven't run across any songs about Conan's sexual exploits, or making it in free fall. However, if these do not exist right now, they will sooner or later.

The filksong attained the status of art in Alexis Gilliland's "2001: A Space Opera," copyright by him, presented at the 1970 Disclave, and well received at Discon II in 1974. The Space Opera contained topical songs from "Student Prince," "Threepenny Opera," and many more. The most notable filksong was neither funny nor satiric. It is reprinted here in its entirety for its sheer beauty. Sing it to the Barcarolle from "Tales of Hoffman" and imagine yourself floating in space:

Here we are, in 2001
Adrift on a sea of space
Gently gliding to the moon
That far and lovely place.

Drift as gravity demands
Precise our orbit bends
Our ship is bound
For distant lands
Our saga never ends

The stars us yet elude
But we reach outward still
To do more than we could
Our heart spurs on the will

The shuttle waits
On the tide
By the space station's gates
To ride
The fiery thrust
To ride

Here we are in 2001
Adrift on a sea of space
Gently gliding to the moon
That far and lovely place

Sable heavens await
At trajectories end
As from gravity's well
Our ships ascend

The shuttle waits on
The tide
By the space station's gates
To ride
The
Thrust
The fiery thrust
To ride

Like folk songs, filksongs are constantly being improved, with new verses written. At a recent party, the fans were gathered around Washington's own "Filthy Pierre" and his "Pierrenola," a marvelous assembly of electronic gadgetry that sounds like a piano, an organ, or practically anything else that he wants it to. The gang reached the end of a song, and Pierre said "Here are the verses you don't have yet." These were duly sung and applauded. SOTWJ 171-172, p. 19 lists "Filthy Pierre's Song Book" in the BOOKS RECEIVED column. It's probably worth your while.

Right now, let's get a more specific idea of filksongs by leafing through the pages of HOPSFANATIC & HYMNAL #3. The songs arrange themselves into groups:

I. Hobbit songs

Nazgul King of Angmar	<u>Tune of</u> Bastard King of England
Orcs' Marching Song	Jesse James
Onward Sauron's Soldiers	Onward Christian Soldiers
High Fly the Nazgul	Green Grow the Rushes
Uruk Hai Drinking Song"	Mademoiselle from Armentieres
Oh Saruman	Canadian National Anthem
Witch King of Angmar	Lili Marlene

*For "Hinky dinky parley-voo" sing "Orcs, and trolls, and balrogs too."

II. Lovecraft songs

Cthulhu's Days Are Here Again	<u>Tune of</u> Happy Days
Cthulhu	They Call the Wind Maria
Old Cthulhu Had a Farm	E-I-E-I-O
Oh, Cthulhu Dear	Wearing of the Green
Ia, Ia Cthulhu	Havah Nagileh
Nec Ro Nom I Con	Harrigan
Sunken R'lyeh Rose for Me	Rock of Ages

III. Two Epics by Randall Garrett

Slan	<u>Tune of</u> Ghost Riders
Caves of Steel	Coming Round the Mountain

Each is a summarization of a complete novel into a song. One verse from "Caves of Steel" quotes Azimov's First Law with clever phrasework:

"Baley doesn't see how R. Daneel could draw
Out his blaster, for the first robotic law
Says 'No robot may, through action or inaction, harm a
fraction
Of a whisker of a human being's jaw.'"

IV. Fan events and Personalities

Ballad of John W. Campbell	<u>Tune of</u> ?
Ballad of Gordy Dickson (by Bova)	Clementine
Bouncing Potatoes (Poul Anderson)	Waltzing Matilda
Oh, No John	Oh, No John

Legend has it that JWC was serenaded at a convention with Oh, No John by a bunch of his authors objecting to his edicts of WHAT THEY WOULD WRITE.

V. Folks Songs Transposed to SF

Spacy Jones	<u>Tune of</u> Casey Jones
Asteroid Light	Eddystone Light
Harlie Played One	This Old Man
What can the Matter Be?	Idem
Old Time Religion	Idem
Drunken Spaceman	Drunken Sailor

VI. Folk songs in more or less original form include My How the Money Rolls In, Bastard King of England, Barnacle Bill the Sailor, and Ballad of Inverness.

VII. Songs otherwise unclassified include a) Clone of My Own to the tune of Home on the Range, Randall Garrett's lefthanded tribute to Time Enough for Love:

Clone, clone of my own
With a Y chromosome changed to X;
And when we're alone
Since her mind is my own,
She'll be thinking of nothing but sex.

b) Chemist's Drinking Song to the tune of Irish Washerwoman. Try singing the first verse:

"Paradimethylaminobenzaldehyde
Sodium citrate, ammonium cyanide
Mix 'em together and add some benzene
And top off the punch with trichloroethylene."

This had better be sung while the gang at your song-fest is still sober enough to have control over its collective tongue. Otherwise forget it! c) Young Man Mulligan to the tunes of "I was born about ten thousand years ago" and "The great Fantastical Bummer," in alternate verses, was printed in *Amra* and then in *Mirage Press' Conan Grimoire*, with a key which is not included here. The song is a compendium of sfictional and fantasy literary references, often 9 or 10 per verse.

Nor is this list the complete contents of the Hymnal . . . which is an outgrowth of the NESFA Hymnal, both introductions to the wonderful world of filksongs. For \$1.25 postpaid from HOPSFA, c/o Student Activities Commission, The John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland 21218, you can hardly go wrong. Read and hum. Chuckle. Sing in the shower, or with friends, and ENJOY!



A PIONEERING WORK OF HUMOROUS SCIENCE FICTION

by Michael T. Shoemaker

Henry Kuttner has a well-deserved reputation as one of the best humorists the SF field ever produced. This reputation is founded primarily on his series of stories about Gallagher, a drunken inventor, and on a series about the Hogbens, a hillbilly family of mutants. Unlike many recent would-be humorists in the SF field, Kuttner's humor was not based so much on funny lines, or characters, or settings (although he did employ all three), as it was on story conception, or plot. So although Gallagher is a funny character, and the stories do contain funny lines, the main reason we laugh is that the predicaments into which he gets are hilarious.

This hallmark of Kuttner's humor is apparent early in his career, when Kuttner and Arthur K. Barnes wrote a humorous time-travel series that is unjustly unknown to most fans today. The series appeared in THRILLING WONDER STORIES under the pen name of Kelvin Kent, and although it began as a collaboration, nearly all the stories were written by either Kuttner or Barnes alone. Here is a bibliography:

Roman Holiday -- August, 1939 -- both authors.
 World's Pharaoh -- December, 1939 -- Kuttner.
 Science is Golden -- April, 1940 -- both authors.
 Knight Must Fall -- June, 1940 -- Barnes (Kuttner did a minor rewrite of the beginning).
 The Comedy of Eras -- September, 1940 -- Kuttner.
 Man About Time -- October, 1940 -- Kuttner.
 The Greeks Had a War for It -- January, 1941 -- Barnes.
 Hercules Muscles In -- February, 1941 -- Kuttner.
 Dames is Poison -- June, 1942 -- Kuttner.
 De Wolfe of Wall Street -- February, 1943 -- Barnes.
 Grief of Bagdad -- June, 1943 -- Barnes.
 Swing Your Lady -- Winter, 1944 -- Kuttner.

The main character of the series is Pete Manx, a sideshow barker and natural con artist. In each story Manx gets transported to some historical era, where he becomes entangled in a life-or-death predicament which he resolves through his own cunning. This sort of idea had been done before, of course, in Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, where the hero's advanced technological knowledge saves him; and simultaneously with the appearance of the first Manx story, L. Sprague de Camp was writing Lest Darkness Fall, the antithesis of the Twain novel. Kuttner and Barnes added their own original twist to the idea by choosing a course midway between those chosen by de Camp and Twain. That is, Manx does not fail, nor does he succeed purely by resorting to technological wonders, but instead he succeeds primarily because of his abilities as a promoter.

The time-travelling device employed in the series is unremarkable. Supposedly, time is an artificial conception of the mind used for imposing order on the universe. Dr. Horatio Mayhem, one of the principal characters in the series, invents a device which frees the consciousness from the limitations of time and allows it to inhabit and control the body of someone from another era. The language barrier is overcome by a hookup with the memories of the host's body. Yet, this introduces an inconsistency in that Manx never knows immediately whose body he inhabits.

In "The Story Behind the Story", a regular feature in which the author told how he wrote the story, Kent said the inspiration for "Roman Holiday" was Jack

(Over)

Shoemaker: A PIONEERING WORK . . . (Continued) --

Binder's "If" feature in the December, 1938 issue, which speculated on how a modern man would make a living in ancient Rome. Kent said the idea came to him in a dream, and when he began the story he had no idea how it would end. Barnes later revealed that "The first Manx yarn I did was written mostly for the fun of it, and, as you know, my wife submitted it to you without my knowledge."

In "Roman Holiday", Dr. Mayhem and Professor Belleigh Aker argue about whether an ordinary 20th-century man could survive in ancient Rome. Aker says, "Despite his apparent advantage of centuries of knowledge, he would be utterly helpless. He would starve for want of ability to make something useful. An office worker--what could he do? Nothing." A bet is made; Manx is hired; and Manx and Aker are sent back to **ancient Rome** to see who will be the most successful. Manx introduces pinball machines to the Romans, thus amassing a fortune, then uses the techniques of a modern political campaign to run for Magistrate. Meanwhile, Aker gets into trouble as a magician, and consequently gets Manx into trouble. In the end Manx saves them from lions with some homemade bombs, explaining that he "used to make fireworks in a medicine show".

"Roman Holiday" was a smashing success and placed first in the issue in the readers' poll. Although it was a good story, in the context of the entire series it does not rank as one of the very best. It suffers from too many contrivances, which are the result of an unplanned ending.

"World's Pharaoh" is much better, although it placed only third in the readers' poll. Kuttner wrote that the story came to him in a dream after he had visited the World's Fair of 1939. In this story Aker is sent to ancient Egypt. The machine breaks down and Mayhem forces Manx at gunpoint to travel back and keep Aker out of trouble until the machine is fixed. Manx gets thrown in with slaves building the pyramids, and after organizing a sit-down strike, he gets an audience with the Pharaoh. He sells the Pharaoh the idea of putting on a World's Fair for glory and fortune.

The next story, "Science is Golden", was the weakest of the first five, but still a good story. In order to escape from Moratti, a gangster, Manx goes back to the days of Robin Hood and ends up in Little John's body. Manx and Robin Hood are imprisoned when Manx's attempt to introduce the idea of a "protective association" fails. Moratti, who was sent back accidentally, saves the day when he builds gliders and leads Robin's men in an attack on Sir Guy of Grisbourne's castle. The two weaknesses in the story are that Manx does very little of substance in the historic era to which he travels, and that the resolution of the story is a purely technological one rather than one of wits.

Once the reader gets past the ridiculous initial assumption of "Knight Must Fall", that Manx has become sensitive to time-travel and can be sent back by any slight electric shock, he is treated to one of the best stories in the series. Manx is sent to King Arthur's court, where he replaces jousting tournaments with tournaments modeled on the fakery of pro wrestling. By gaining the favor of Arthur he incurs the enmity of Merlin. He is forced to battle Lancelot, but is saved when Aker (sent back to help him) provides him with nitrous Oxide and a rope which Manx uses as a lariat. Although science saves the day once again, at least this time Manx practices his wiles successfully before getting in trouble.

"The Comedy of Eras", which was inspired by a reader's suggestion that Manx visit Elizabethan times, is undoubtedly the best story in the series. Significantly, it is the only Pate Manx story ever anthologized (in Phil Stong's superb

(Cont. next page)

Shoemaker: A PIONEERING WORK . . . (Continued) --

1941 anthology, The Other Worlds). The story is very humorous in conception, well-plotted, and the resolution of the problem is a result of Manx's resourcefulness. Also, for the first time in the series, the body he inhabits plays an integral role in the plot.

Mayhem and Aker argue about who wrote Shakespeare's plays, so they send Manx to find out. He ends up supplying Shakespeare with ideas and plots as remembered from the movie versions of the plays. He also introduces swing music to the bar-room folk, which later proves instrumental in getting him out of trouble. The clincher at the end is that Manx is in the body of Francis Bacon (clues are provided, too).

In "The Story Behind the Story" provided for "The Comedy of Eras", "Man About Time", and "Hercules Muscles In", Kuttner develops an elaborate lie about the identity of Kelvin Kent. He calls himself a "bald-headed old duffer who tips the scales at more than 200", and refers to his daughters, his profession in the cheese industry, and a recent granddaughter. Apparently Kuttner believed a pseudonym should have an identity of its own. But as a result, the information in these three installments regarding the origin of their respective stories is mostly false.

"Man About Time" is one of the three poor stories in the series. Through an accident, Manx is sent back to prehistoric times. No historical background is used; very little of Manx's usual scheming takes place; and for the first time in the series the action that occurs is not integral to the plot. In other words, much of the action could be easily inserted in any run-of-the-mill, time-traveling, space opera. With the publication of this story, the tide of enthusiastic reception of the series gradually began to turn. One reader wrote of "Man About Time": "I know Kent can write. This fact screams at you as you read the tripe he parboils under the banner of Pete Manx."

"The Greeks Had a War for It" was a good story--not one of the best, but a vast improvement over the previous one. Manx sets up an Historical Research Corporation and gets contracted by a famous novelist to research the siege of Troy. Manx and Aker go back to the period, and Manx occupies the body of Captain Stentor, while Aker occupies the body of Paris. They have a month to complete the research, but learn that the war has another year to go. Manx decides to hasten the end, but finds that Aker is enjoying his position and wants to prolong matters. The rest is a battle of wits.

This is an atypical Manx adventure because it involves little interaction with the historical characters or period, and Manx does not get in a jam or use his cleverness to meddle in history to any significant extent. Yet, a battle of wits between two modern men in a primitive time is an interesting idea.

"Hercules Muscles In" was the last of the top-notch Manx stories. Bigpig Callahan, a wrestler whom Manx manages, gets sent back in time accidentally. Manx goes back to keep him out of trouble. Callahan ends up as Hercules, and Manx is a slave under his protection. Manx sets up a taxi service for the king with a 50% franchise for himself. But the king wants the whole set-up, so he gives Hercules ever more difficult tasks, hoping Hercules will be killed, after which he can kill Manx. In the course of the story Manx introduces a dude ranch into Grecian life and aids Hercules' labors with technology.

A letter in the February, 1942 issue mentions Kuttner as the author of the series. So the identity of at least one of the men behind the pseudonym was common knowledge by this time.

(Over)

Shoemaker: A PIONEERING WORK . . . (Continued) --

"Dames is Poison" is another of the three poor stories in the series. Kuttner said the Borgia milieu was suggested by a letter from Russ Hodgkins. While at Mayhem's lab, Manx's nephew swallows a pellet thought to be poison from Lucretia Borgia's ring. Manx goes back to find out what kind of poison it was, so that the proper antidote can be given. There is an unclear explanation of a disparate time lapse which will allow Manx to get back only moments later, while taking as long as he wants in the past. Kuttner uses a hash of old, minor gimmicks to have Manx gain favor in the court of Cesare Borgia. An Arab guest gives Manx the location, which he writes down in Arabic, of a treasure. Through a muddled series of improbable events, it turns out that the pellet was the parchment hidden by Manx in a ball of tar. In the end Manx says: "He didn't swallow poison. He just ate a million dollars."

Surprisingly, reader reaction to this story was quite favorable, but this was probably because it was the first to appear after more than a year's lapse in the series. The next two stories were much better--not top-notch, but entertaining.

"De Wolfe of Wall Street" is really a conventional time-travel story not at all in the Manx manner. Manx goes back to 1929 to cash in before the stock market crash, but fails when the leading millionaires have him thrown in jail so that they can dump their holdings before the crash. Of course, Manx's machinations turn out to be the very cause of the crash. I believe the story is important because it was the first use of this idea, which was later redone, with nothing new added, by C.M. Kornbluth in "Dominoes" (in Star Science Fiction #1).

In "Grief of Bagdad" the Army asks Manx and Mayhem to find out whether there was really a magic carpet, and if there was, to learn the secret. Manx goes to Bagdad and sets up vaudevillian theaters, amassing a fortune, while searching for the carpet. His search intensifies when the Caliph pressures him to find the carpet under threat of death. Manx gets out of the situation by building a hydrogen-filled balloon (which he pretends is the carpet) and persuading the Caliph to ride in it. He tells the Caliph to throw the stones out to descend, and the Caliph blows away in a sandstorm.

The last story in the series, "Swing Your Lady", was also one of the three poor ones. While trying to escape from a lady who wants to marry him, Manx goes back in time only to be captured by Amazons. He eventually gets the upper hand by having a Goddess speak in his favor, involving the use of ventriloquism, a searchlight, and a slight electric shock when any Amazon touches him--just a re-write of all the old gimmicks of playing God before some savages. Even Kuttner seems to have lost interest in the series by the time this story appeared (it was obviously written to cash in on the last ounce of popularity left in the series).

One of the problems facing an author of a series of related stories is how to convey background information for the benefit of a reader new to the series, without boring an old reader of the series. Kuttner and Barnes solve this problem admirably, via an incredibly concise presentation of only the necessary details. This economy of words also applies to their dramatic technique. The characters are introduced, a problem is posed, and Manx is sent back in time very swiftly. Thus the action is fast-paced and the reader's interest can never flag.

An amazing fact about the series is that there is virtually no disparity in the styles of the two authors. Also, both authors played an equal role in the success of the series, for although three of the six stories by Kuttner alone are among the best, the other three are the absolute worst; and while none of the four by Barnes alone is among the best, all four are consistently good.

The Pete Manx series is a pioneering work of humorous science fiction, and deserves to be collected for book publication.

SWORDS & SORCERY IS A GAME TOO!

by Gary Gygax

Many fantasy novels and stories relate epic battles and give detailed histories of the mythical world upon which such action takes place. This sort of fare is meat and drink to the devotee of wargaming, but until about two years ago there wasn't much he could do to put this imaginative action and creation into his hobby. Similarly, the swords & sorcery buff was unable to do much more than read. This changed with the advent of Dungeons & Dragons (S10, from TSR Hobbies, Inc., POBox 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147). This is a game which, according to the box cover, is: "Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures". This may not sound very prepossessing, but the game certainly is for those with imagination and a love of swords & sorcery.

The player assumes the role of some heroic character--fighter, magic-user, cleric, or thief. He may stipulate that the persona is human, elven, dwarven, or hobbitish. Having previously generated the various abilities of his character, the enthusiast then sets off on a series of "adventures" which take place in towns, in labyrinthine dungeons, or in the wilderness. The appeal of the game is its fantasy base and the fact that imagination is allowed complete freedom. Furthermore, success is rewarded not only by having the person remain "alive" but also by the increase in the prowess of that character. For example, a fighter gains greater stamina and striking ability, a magic-user more numerous and more powerful spells, a cleric more ease in handling "undead" and more of his type of spells as well, while the thief obtains a greater degree of ability in practicing the various functions of his chosen profession.

It is the referee, or Dungeonmaster, who makes this all happen. With his copy of D&D he must set about building a whole fantasy world--large or limited--for his group of players to operate in. The most immediately important aspect of this world will be the maze of underground passages and chambers, but eventually he must design an entire cultural area (perhaps many). He may draw upon folklore, myth, fairy tales, or the writing of some favorite author for his background, but even then the Dungeonmaster must spend many hours and much creativity forming what will be a playable campaign setting. If he is alert he will temper his own particular wishes with the tastes of the playing group. Thus, the referee may favor a setting based upon Norse mythology, but if some of the participants are prone to Celtic myth, while others that of the Finns, he will blend them into the overall play in some fashion so as to make the game all the more enjoyable while at the same time maintaining his own original "flavor".

As the game is also one of interaction between the players and the Dungeonmaster, it is as challenging and varied as they are. The two factions alternately act as sounding boards. First the referee creates the basic area in which the players act. As they learn of this creation, and seek to outwit and out-imagine him, the Dungeonmaster must make further efforts to challenge the participants. At a certain point he will also introduce the factor of interplayer rivalry--or perhaps he will have to simulate it through the use of puppets which he controls. Considering the burden D&D places upon the referee, it might seem that such individuals would be as scarce as proverbial hen's teeth. Tain't so. There are hundreds of highly imaginative and creative game players who were evidently just waiting to pounce upon a vehicle such as Dungeons & Dragons. From many lengthy talks with such persons, it is quite marvellous to learn how great and varied is the amount of effort and inspiration they put into these campaigns. There is, naturally, considerable parallel invention, and many of these campaigns are based upon the same source, but from these common points they vary wildly and most in-

(Over)

Gygax: SWORDS & SORCERY IS A GAME TOO! (Continued) --

terestingly, from ponderous games rigidly structured upon the exact text of D&D, through various mythos-based campaigns where the words of JRRT or HPL are writ, to the extravagant fantasia of comic-book characters and magic.

Perhaps this is an appropriate time to mention the basic inspiration for the rules proper. Both authors of Dungeons & Dragons are avid readers of all forms of imaginative literature. They are both amateur historians. Of course games and game playing are their primary hobby interests. From a background of childhood fairy tales and such, through a study of various mythologies, amid a welter of fantasy and swords & sorcery stories, D&D was born. It arose from a combination of warfare with miniature figures and the desire to create heroic epics of the strange and supernatural. In no particular order, I mention some of the authors who most strongly influenced its creation: A. Merritt (fantasy and super-science), Lovecraft (horrible alien gods), Howard (the super-hero), Leiber (the adventure on parallel earths), de Camp & Pratt (treating myths and mythos as adventure), Poul Anderson (the heroic quest), Tolkien (the complete epic), Vance (magic and imagination), Burroughs (the pit adventure), as well as Brackett, Farmer, St. Clair, Fox, Haggard, Petaja, and Saberhagen.

Currently D&D is spreading through the wargaming hobby very rapidly, at the same time making inroads amongst college students and swords & sorcery fans. It is a game of personal adventuring which allows creativity on many levels and considerable player identification with the creation. Because of this, and because of the open-ended nature of D&D campaign gaming--where progression, rather than winning per se, is the object--its popularity is destined to wax still greater for some time to come. Additionally, if some of the swords & sorcery authors get their hands into this aspect of gaming--and Lin Carter has recently done so by co-authoring a work on wargames in the "Hyborean Age"--it could achieve national attention, for D&D (with its progenitor Chainmail and its "Fantasy Supplement") is unquestionably the granddaddy of them all, and it will be hard to displace as the most popular swords & sorcery game.

It is also worth noting that the very flexible guidelines of D&D allow it to be mixed with virtually any historical period or created history. Thus games can be moved backwards to the ancient, integrated with modern technology, placed upon a post-atomic war Earth peopled by mutants, or sprinkled with true science fiction. In this regard it is a true fantasy game rather than a strict swords & sorcery one. The authors of D&D, along with scores of eager contributors, continually add to the body of the game by means of articles in the STRATEGIC REVIEW (also published by TSR Hobbies, Inc.) and through periodically released supplements to D&D. (To date there are two such supplements, Greyhawk and Blackmoor.) Future articles and supplements will detail many approaches to integrating the game with historical periods rather than the medieval or the dissimilar mythical times.

If you enjoy challenge and adventure of the intellect, if your imagination is of heroic proportion, if you are a true swords & sorcery fan, it is quite likely that you will enjoy Dungeons & Dragons. As a word of warning, however, it is advised that you approach the game with extreme caution, for it is highly addictive and hazardous to the pursuit of most other activities. On the bright side, it seems to be nearly as enjoyable to females as it is to males, so the lovelife of the typical addict is not entirely forsaken! Those who don't always play the game are usually writing articles about it.

((We'd like to hear from any of our readers who've played D&D. Future installments of the TSJ SF/Fantasy games column will deal with Interplanetary, SF&F Diplomacy Variants, and any other SF&F games our readers may care to share with us. --ed.))

At the beginning of the Cambrian, some 600,000,000 years ago, there occurred a remarkable episode, which was without precedent and has never been repeated. Until that point in time . . . and while it may seem an abuse of language to describe 2-3,000,000 years as a "point," we are considering a time span of 3-4,000,000 years¹ in which the "point in time" involved comprises about .05%. By comparison, Watergate, which may be considered to have run from June 17, 1972 until August 8, 1974 amounted to a total of 813 days, .05% of which is about 10 hours, surely a point in the sense that the men who iterated the phrase ". . . point in time . . ." had intended it.

Until that point in time, then, I say, life, and by life I mean Precambrian life, consisted mainly of blue-green algae, whose fossilized remains have come down to us in the form of great algal mats that were preserved in the usual fossiliferous fashion.

There is reason to believe that the whole earth was covered with a relatively few species of blue-green algae, peacefully soaking up the Precambrian sunlight, as they had done for uncounted millions of years (billions, actually, but who's counting?). Death was unknown. Each algae cell divided by fission, and (monstrous conceit) they could truly say to one another (were they able to communicate) "Thou art me" and "Thee/me art God." Those blue-green algae would have reason to believe that God had created algae in his own image, since there were no other images available. By the end of the Precambrian, Death stood ready to make its entrance.

What happened is that there was a fantastic proliferation of life forms in a space of time so brief that Darwin, considering the evidence, could only conclude that it favored Divine Creation. Clearly something had happened, but exactly what and even approximately why, no one could say.

Reaching for Occam's razor, an ecologist has recently come up with the suggestion that requires no great effects, coincidences or improbable sequences of events, and which also, surprise, surprise!, fits with the known ecological facts of today.

In brief, the known ecological facts are these: in an ecological system without grazers, one life form becomes dominant, driving out its competition by virtue of its simple superiority. If grazers are then introduced, they preferentially eat the dominant life form, which permits the non-dominant life forms room to grow, and also attracting predators to eat the grazers. In short, the introduction of grazers to an ecological system increases the complexity of that system both horizontally (many more species of plants in the area) and vertically (food chains of animals).

Now in the present day grazers and predators alike wander over from the next county or the next island.

Consider the interface between Cambrian and Precambrian, however. Here is a world of edible algae, ungrazed forever. Then, early on the morning June 17, 602,001,972 BC a biological accident takes place! A single-celled creature is born (*not* fissioned! It is not the same as the template of DNA from which it was struck!) which *EATS ALGAE!*

Arrrgh! A grazer in the Garden of Eden!

Needless to say, the Era of Algae was at an end. The little one-celled grazers expanded like yeast in a brewers vat, and soon some of the grazers must (out of hunger and opportunism) have turned predator, as Death and Sex and Competition all raised their monstrous and hitherto unfamiliar heads.

The question that must next be faced is: why did things happen with such blinding speed?

Benjamin Franklin organized the Police Department and the Fire Department in Philadelphia. The Police Department was easy, none existed and all that had to be done was to draw up the table of organization and build the police stations and hire the police. The Fire Department, on the other hand, had to displace several existing private fire companies, some of whom were politically connected and all of whom had vested interests which they sought to conserve. Franklin had the Police Department set up and running in a single season. The Fire Department required nearly five years.

This anecdote is (I flatter myself) exactly to the point. Evolution-as-we-know-it consists of new species competing successfully with old species, a time-consuming process at best. At the beginning of the Cambrian, in contrast, new species were getting organized from scratch, unhindered by the competition of an existing established species.

Consider the clam. It is a predator, filter-feeding on the grazers who eat the algae. It must have required a lot of fiddling and redesign to integrate mussel, shell and filters. *BUT!* While it was doing this, it was in a very forgiving environment, just as the Fokker Eindecker was for a time the best war-plane in the world (It was the Eindecker that inspired an MP to describe the 1915 RAF as "Fokker fodder" rather than any of the later and superior models such as the DR-1 or the D-7 or the D-8 (which appeared in the summer of 1918, and would have wiped out the Sopwith Camel, except that in the fall of 1918 the British introduced the Sopwith Snipe to replace the Camel)). Also, the emerging clam, few in number, tentative in design, was free from predation. It was, in its day, the most advanced life form extant.

Once it was a joyous success, however, and clam beds became abundant, tentative clam eaters began to assert themselves.

Very shortly then, the Cambrian found itself in full swing, as the blue-green algae vanished to be replaced by green algae, and an infinite host of life forms which fed upon it and each other, and from which we ourselves are descended.

¹The total duration of life on earth.



THE ESFA REPORT

Minutes of Meeting of 4/1/76 --

(by Allan Howard, Secretary, ESFA)

The meeting was opened by Director Moskowitz at 3:25 p.m., with an attendance of 10 persons. The Secretary's minutes were read and accepted, as was the Treasurer's report. There was no old or new business.

Mike Fogaris said that the E. Hoffman Price collection, Far Lands, Other Days, a 2000-copy edition, is out from Carcosa House. It has 570 pages and 31 stories, with a full-page illustration for each story, and sells for \$15.00. There is an introduction by Price on his early writing career that is very informative, as well as fresh and revealing. Price, who has sold over 600 stories, reveals--among other things--that Through the Gates of the Silver Key was written entirely by H.P. Lovecraft.

This led into a discussion of the resurgence of the fan press in recent years, after its demise following its original short life, circa 1946-1955. Interest was expressed in the forthcoming Lovecraft biography by Frank Belknap Long, and in what Long would have to say about him. Moskowitz said that with the exception of David H. Keller, writers previous to L. Sprague de Camp were all apologists for Lovecraft. The de Camp book was needed for balance against the others.

Sam Moskowitz reported that Leo Margulies died of a stroke at age 75 on Dec. 26, 1975. Moskowitz gave a brief biography of Margulies, and mentioned that as an editor he was well liked by the authors with whom he did business.

The Director introduced the guest speaker, Robert A.W. Lowndes, as an old-time fan, writer, poet, and editor, and who will be prominently featured in Damon Knight's forthcoming 50,000-word book on the Futurians. Mr. Lowndes began by commenting on Samuel R. Delany's Dhalgren as, "the type of novel that drags him back into what he reads SF for to get away from".

When he and his contemporaries began reading SF back in the '30's they read it to escape such things as everyday monotony and a sense of isolation. There was nothing in the stories to drag them back. They were pure entertainment, and despite crude writing, they had a beginning, went somewhere, and had an end. There was a sense of wonder in the author, who wrote SF because he loved it, and it was conveyed and communicated to the reader. They were not out to prove anything, but to pass along a few ideas.

Reading the letter-columns, Mr. Lowndes found that readers, even then, were looking back to some kind of "Golden Age". There were stories that they talked glowingly about that had apparently appeared in such magazines as ARGOSY. These earlier writers had a richness of style, description, and characterization that was a holdover from 19th-century writing. Even in the '30's fans were saying, "SF ain't what it used to be." As time went on, readers were looking back and saying how much better were the stories in SCIENCE WONDER and Tremaine's "thought variants" in ASTOUNDING. Later, a new group of writers began coming in from the ranks of fans and readers. Some tried to write the same type of story they had been reading, while others demanded more relevance. They wanted to get away from a sense of wonder, write stories to wake people up, and to make a better world.

Mr. Lowndes continued to touch on trends and highlights in SF history. He reiterated that there were always those who said that, "SF ain't what it used to be", while there were also those who contended that, "SF ain't even good."

Calling himself an unregenerate escapist, Mr. Lowndes said he reads to enjoy. Summing up, he seems to think that SF is not as good as it used to be if you are looking at it from a particular time, but on the other hand it is just as good if you're looking for something different.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

(Over)

THE ESFA REPORT (Continued) --

Minutes of Meeting of 1/2/76 --

(by Allan Howard, Secretary, ESFA)

The meeting was called to order by Director Moskowitz at 3:37 p.m., with an attendance of six persons. The Secretary's minutes were read and accepted, with one correction offered by Richard Hodgens. He recalled that January's speaker, Robert A.W. Lowndes, had not claimed to have read Samuel R. Delany's Dhalgren, but had gained his opinion from reviews he had read. The Treasurer being absent, there was no report.

Mike Fogaris commented on Arthur C. Clarke's Imperial Earth, which has been receiving good reviews, and was selected as a Book of the Month alternate and by the SF Book Club. Discussion was had of critics, who are sometimes too enthusiastic, and went on to the many illustrated histories of SF now appearing. Richard Hodgens, speaking of the Damon Knight anthology, SF of the Thirties, thought it strange that, coming on the heels of the New Wave, so many of its proponents are returning to the older material for their books. Moskowitz, who has long been saying that old is not necessarily bad, calls some of these historians and anthologists "opportunists who are out to make a buck".

Through the courtesy of Max Spielberg, who could not be present, there was a presentation of color slides of "A Step Into the Universe". There were 72 views of NASA's Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo projects, covering astronauts, blast-offs, splashdowns, space-walks, views of the moon and Earth from space, and the moon landing of Apollo XI.

Sam Moskowitz gave a talk entitled, "New Perspectives on Jules Verne". Sam recently purchased 30 volumes of a French publication, THE MAGAZINE OF EDUCATION AND RECREATION, for the years 1864-1880. The magazine was started in 1864 by M. Jules Hetzel, a publisher of hard-cover books for juveniles. Hetzel had previously met Verne when he had submitted a history of ballooning for publication. Hetzel advised Verne to turn the history into a work of adventure fiction. After accepting the story, Hetzel, who was contemplating starting a magazine aimed at ages 10-16, signed Verne to a contract to write two novels a year for 20 years. Verne immediately quit his job.

Verne, like Edgar Rice Burroughs, was 35 years old, and had not been very successful at a variety of jobs and endeavors. He told a friend that he had just discovered a wonderful new writing formula: science combined with fiction. From then on every issue of the magazine included a serialized novel, or other Verne writing, for the life of the magazine. He later became editor, and when he died in 1905, the magazine did not long survive him.

Critics of Verne have often felt that the translations didn't do him justice, that the writing was often awkward and too simplistic. Others have commented on the absence of love scenes or any hint of sex. Moskowitz pointed out that even though Verne has always been accepted in the U.S. as a writer of adult fare which happened to appeal to juveniles, it is now very obvious that he was writing solely for the younger audience. This was his job and livelihood. He was thought of as a juvenile writer in France, and also in England, where 16 of his novels were serialized in boy's magazines before publication began in the U.S.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

((ESFA is, of course, the Eastern S.F. Assoc., which meets on the first Sunday of each month at 3 p.m. at the YM/YMCA in Newark, NJ. ## We have been struggling to decide whether to run these minutes in the SF&F NEWSLETTER or in this 'zine; they have news value, which makes them a candidate for SFN; but the reports on the interesting talks are TSJ-type material. We'll probably extract the news for TSJ, and run entire minutes here. (Only wish someone would provide similar reports on the equally interesting meetings of the new PRSFS....) --ed.))

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH

(A potpourri of material by & about
our neighbors from North of the
Border, presented in chronological
order of receipt.)

From Jim Goldfrank (our "French Translator") (undated) --

Here are some excerpts from a letter of Norbert Spehner. It seems to me that the readers would be interested in his fanac and his hopes for fandom in French Canada.

"I am a professor of literature in a college at Longueuil [a suburb of Montreal--JG]. My specialty: science fiction, which has had great success with the students. And with my colleagues...who have insisted that my course be given at least once a year. With some interested students, I launched REQUIEM.

"This year's projects include (1) finishing my thesis on fantastic literature (a bibliography of studies of fantastic literature), (2) editing two anthologies, one of French-Canadian SF, the other of fantastic stories, (3) meeting with numerous fans, and (4) continuing to publish REQUIEM, of which the number of subscribers continues to increase slowly, very slowly, but surely. In REQUIEM #7 you will see projects that are beginning to come to a boil off in the shadows. SF LIVES! in Québec, and without boasting, I can say that REQUIEM exists for a good reason. The magazine is a stimulant for several persons who write but despair of finding readers. Even if their texts are not published, they all set themselves to write more, or to rewrite.

"All this is encouraging, and in one or two years, we will be able to reap the fruits of our efforts. I even envisage eventually starting a small publishing house (very modest, but everything must have a beginning), another fanzine, completely personal, that will be sent to serious fans, and many other projects that are perhaps wild and crazy. These will perhaps never see the light of day, but they are pleasant to think about. Ah, these SF fans, all dreamers. I believe that your wife is right; it is a part of our childhood that we have not outgrown...happily for us; it's bothersome to be a grownup. Besides, our great myths of the Golden Age, of Thule, of Hyperborea and other legendary countries, Eden and other idyllic spots, aren't these transposed versions of the famous 'lost paradises' of childhood? I think that Bradbury would not agree. At least one prefers such explanations to such as Von Daniken. How SF holds us [and we do not even wish to struggle free--JG/!"

Next, some letters dealing with a bit of controversy following Daniel Say's letter in TWJ #85, which, in turn, was commenting on a Jim Goldfrank review of REQUIEM which appeared in SOTWJ #185:

From Jim Goldfrank to Daniel Say (1/9/75) --

I gather that your letter in TWJ #85, L8-9 was more a putdown of the French-Canadian fanzine REQUIEM than it was of my barely adequate abilities as a French translator. I'm not certain what axe you are grinding, so let me make a few observations, and answer only a few of your objections.

My background in French is from college, with continued reading plus talks with relatives and friends in Canada...I understand pretty much of what I read and pick out the rest from context, only occasionally resorting to a Petit Larousse, not a translating dictionary. I do miss puns, but I'll get to that.

(Over)

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

I do have a few prejudices. The first is that the greater part of Americans are linguistically parochial, with little appreciation of other languages, peoples, cultures. This is not difficult when one can travel from ocean to ocean, speaking the same language. For example, most people in my area take little cognizance of the fact that there are five million or so French-speaking people six hundred miles to the north of us. Other cultures are to be appreciated and treasured, not homogenized as described in Silverberg's "Schwartz Between the Galaxies". So prejudice #2 is that I like the Québécois and their culture. Since science fiction reading and fanac are my favorite way of spending pleasure/leisure time, I'm damned glad to see an emerging Quebec fan culture, as evidenced by REQUIEM. The article about REQUIEM was not only a review of REQUIEM, but also a personal statement of hearty approval of people who retain and develop their cultural heritage.

I can't disagree with you when you say that the short-short stories in REQUIEM #4 were not atmosphere pieces. Whether a work is a mood piece is a subjective matter, and I could only call them as I saw them. I did miss the pun about the ghost becoming a shade of itself. Norbert Spehner pointed that out to me, pre-publication, but I let it go intentionally. Puns lose in translation, and the word "shade" for spirit in English is relatively rare in English, being mostly found in books of Greek mythology.

Your note about the wide French acceptance of Lovecraft, wider than in the U.S., is well taken. This was not an omission, but too peripheral to the article to include. A well-written and perceptive book on the subject is Maurice Lévy's Lovecraft, which explains the author through his works and vice versa. A translation/condensation of it will appear, published by Don Miller, when I finish it, and if Don gets permission to print.

In conclusion, let me urge you to support and contribute to the high-quality effort that is REQUIEM. I'd hate to see the initiative of a well-produced French-language fanzine in North America founder through non-support and fault-finding, and find ourselves back at the drawing boards.

LoC from Say to Don Miller, for TSJ #86 (6/9/75) -- (Extract of pertinent part)

"I was thinking in spurts a bit when I wrote that letter about the REQUIEM review. The passage of time shows me too many. Sentence fragments. I got a letter from M. Spehner about my comments to him in a similar letter, and he said that he had no shame about such horrible puns. Also that that issue was a special one of short stories and usually they had longer fiction when they had it at all. More I can't quote, as I can't find anything this week and don't want to go on from my (slightly imperfect) memory."

Letter from Say to Goldfrank, with cc to Miller (8/9/75) --

"I've written a short comment to Mr. Miller on 6 September about this REQUIEM based on my memory of a letter from Spehner which I couldn't find a couple of days ago. Now I've found it and with everything in front of me, here goes.

"My comment to TWJ was about your review of REQUIEM, Mr. Goldfrank, and what I felt to be missing of the point. I had received a copy of #4 since Mr. Miller mentioned it in the Fanzine listings, and followed your review along. You, Mr. Goldfrank, went along that issue page by page. When you came to the short stories you specifically mentioned two: 'Maladie', of which you said there was a loss of

(Cont. next page)

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

feeling when you translated it, conveying the impression that it was a mood piece; and 'La Belle a l'asteroide charmant', in the same paragraph.

"Now both of these are a play on words, and the whole story is told to make the pun. I regard such puns as very low forms of humor, and while some puns show wit, these were decidedly clumsy, much as the worst of the sledgehammer-like Feg-hoots that some fans like. These kind of things do not show a maturity as you say you see in this fanzine. I did not feel that they were good (more from M. Spehner on this point below) or that most of the stories, as Mr. Goldfrank put in his review in SOTNJ 185/11, 'try to convey a mood or atmosphere'. They were juvenile puns, and if Quebecois want to get a quebecois SF off the ground they should get away from a non-commercial and unuseable length and try to be more serious and to write useable fiction."

The letter next has two excerpts from letters between Say and Spehner, in French, which Jim Goldfrank has translated for us:

Say to Spehner 10/7/75: "Sir, you should be ashamed. Those stories, those frightful, unspeakable puns. And you wrote a part of them. Aren't you ashamed? # "..."The short stories. I think that REQUIEM is the only market for SF in Quebec except for NCUS. Right? I believe that this encouragement of young fans to write these short stories is a bad thing. Why? Because there is no market for short stories, and all writers must try to write longer ones. Without these longer stories, REQUIEM remains a 'vanity magazine' written for a small introspective audience, and having little to do with the larger world outside. And you want your writers to someday be professionals?"

Spehner to Say, 3/8/75: "No, my dear Mr. Say, I am not ashamed at all of REQUIEM #4 in which appeared those 'frightful, unspeakable puns' of which I even wrote a few. Here's why.... ## "..."#4 was a special short-short story edition that had been announced for a long time. This number was a success as measured by the 80 people who sent in their texts. That's pretty good participation, don't you think? And that was the essential goal of that collection, to get people to participate, to get them to want to write a little story for fun. For some of them, this was perhaps the only story they ever wrote, but I know that some of them found the exercise interesting, and began to write longer and more elaborate pieces. Please recognize that some of these pieces were really quality writing. I'm thinking of Journel's 'Last Subway Train', and his 'Avatars', and Claude Lamay's 'The Trap'. That said, #4 was a special issue, and in other issues, you will find longer stories. I recommend to you the stories of Sernine in #5. ## "I regret that the number of pages in REQUIEM does not permit the publication of long texts. But I'm going to remedy that by publishing anthologies of fantasy and science fiction stories."

Say's comments then continue:

"So much for Spehner. #4 was a special issue of short stories which had been asked for from readers. And when one considers that they have published the best, thanks to Le Bon Dieu that we didn't read the worst.

"Why I was surprised that you didn't mention the overwhelming influence of Lovecraft in francophone SF and REQUIEM in particular, was that it was so common in references in REQUIEM. You mentioned it in passing in your comment on Lovecraft and atmosphere in SOTNJ 185/11, and dismissed what I felt would be of major interest to the anglophone readers. They don't get that many Lovecraft references in American general fanzines.

(Over)

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

"The stories were often Lovecraftian--the Gougou was a relative of Chthulu; consider all the Metro (subway) stories and Lovecraft's involvement with them in his story 'At the Mountains of Madness' and in his ghoulish practices under Boston, etc.; the concern of Mr. Spehner in his 'history' with the tale of the supernatural (and not SF); the poll with Lovecraft occupying three of the ten places; the article on new francophone books by a fan under Chthulu pseudonym, etc. I don't think that this Lovecraftian influence is, as you said in your letter of 1 September, 'too peripheral to the article to include'.

"On to your personal defense. Yes, I was criticizing the quality of the contents (certainly not the repro) of REQUIEM and not your translation, which I found accurate. Though, as I go on at some length about the above, you missed, I felt, the point in your two quotes of the stories. The review in general was a bit too favorable.. (By the way, any of you readers out there with about three years of high school French should be able to follow this fanzine quite well and find out which of us is more correct. Send \$1 to N. Spehner, 455 Rue St. Jean, Longueuil, Quebec J4H 2Z6, Canada.) And I distrust anything that is a bit gushy.

"Yes, Americans are linguistically parochial. French is the major language (in numbers taught) in U.S. schools with Spanish second, and there should be more French-reading fans. While the U.S. protests having bussing rammed down their throats, Canadians (by which I mean Anglophones) protest any semblance of 'French bring rammed down our throats' in the name of linguistic equality . . . such as the possibility for a trial in French in the English sea.

"As for your statement 'most people in my area take little cognizance of the fact that there are five million or so French-speaking people six hundred miles to the north of us', we in general have the problem making them, i.e., you, realize that this is a different country with different traditions and customs. I still get manuscripts for my fanzines with return address envelopes and U.S. stamps. . . Doesn't anyone down there realize that just as we can't use Mexican or Canadian stamps inside the U.S. so we can't use U.S. stamps in Canada? Canadian stamps yes. Don't they even realize that this is a separate country?" [Say then includes a paragraph in which he attempts to show that he has a greater love for Quebec than Goldfrank by indicating the friends and records he has from the Fr.-speaking area.]

"I have subscribed to REQUIEM and would like to support it, allowing it, for example, reprint and translation rights to any articles that may appear under my copyright. But it should strive to be a professional magazine in the type of fiction that it encourages. Commercial length and style are important, and the idea of just getting them to write is not enough. They need workshoping and more commercial practice. And the francophile markets."

Letter from Spehner to Say, Translated by Goldfrank (undated, but translation okayed by Spehner 23/9/75):

"Good heavens! What do I see in TWJ #85? is it possible? Is REQUIEM already a subject of controversy? But...that's GLORY, FAME, what am I saying-- INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION! Americans and Canadians dig up the hatchet and brandish it, all about a poor little fanzine from Quebec? No, no! Gentlemen, please smoke the peace pipe, it isn't worth the effort. Think about it, crossing swords, or pens, for a fanzine published by college students for 60 other college students..

"Having said that, my dear Daniel, I must confess that I find in you at least one serious shortcoming: you completely lack a sense of humor, and this is regret-

(Cont. next page)

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

table, on this bitch of a planet. There is an old saying that life should not be taken too seriously, since, in any case, no one ever leaves it alive. Thus you did not appreciate the frightful puns in REQUIEM #4. But perhaps you missed the spirit of them because of certain linguistic weaknesses. Nobody's perfect. Your knowledge of French is remarkable, but you still make great errors of interpretation. Thus the expression '...lui en fit voir de toutes les couleurs' doesn't translate '...made him see colors' but means '...caused him a thousand miseries' or even 'made his life impossible'. Thus you miss the subtle pun on spectre/couleurs. (Groan, groan?) And so forth....

"You are also greatly mistaken about our filthy Gougou. He is a personnage of Quebec and Amerind folklore, and a relative of the famous sasquatch of British Columbia. Let everyone choose his own monster!

"I will not hide the fact that you have insulted me royally (noblesse oblige) when you state a bit facetiously that 'It (REQUIEM) is about 60 fans talking to one another through the medium of a junior college-subsidized fanzine'. For heaven's sake! #4 must have really shocked you. But have you seen #'s 5 and 6? The more or less funny short-short stories in #4 had one goal: to encourage the participation of as many fans as possible. 75 of them (not 60) sent in texts. These texts have clearly not revolutionized science fiction, but have contributed to bringing closer the members of a fandom searching to find its identity, and on the march.

"Many projects are in the process of taking shape, encouraged by the experience of REQUIEM. So for the love of the Great Gougou, you longtime serious fan, give us a little time before you begin to batter us to pieces. Cthulhu didn't create this chaotic world in one night. Besides, did you ever try to publish a fanzine with a bunch of neo-fans who don't have much SF experience? It isn't easy. And we didn't even know if we would have a public.... But at the end of a year of publication, REQUIEM has 150 subscribers, prints 1,000 copies, and is on sale in more than 20 bookstores in the province. It trades copies with 50 other fanzines in France, Belgium, Austria, Canada, and the U.S., not to mention England. For my part, I find it encouraging. Perhaps in two or three years, if Nyarlathotep and Daniel Say give us a chance, we will have a well-established SF. But, what the devil, give us the time!

"Being the insulted party in this sad history, I challenge you to a duel the next time you come to that foreign country, Quebec. I have the choice of weapons, and choose 'filets mignons flambes au cognac' at thirty paces, with a few good bottles of 'Beaujolais Momessin, Cuvée St. Pierre' wine as witnesses. We will see who of the English- and French-speaking Canadians will have the last word. Let Bacchus decide the better man.

"Without bitterness, remember that 'sometimes puns are fun'. Groan.

"P.S. The magazine NOUS is science fiction? Sex fiction, yes...."

And, finally, a short (translated) letter from Goldfrank to Say (27/9/75) --

This letter marks the end of the controversy between you and Norbert Spehner, at least as far as I am concerned. I have spent entirely sufficient time: write to one, translate the reply of the other. Now Don Miller has letters from Spehner, from you, and from me. I don't know how much space he can set aside in his next letter column for all that.

(Over)

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

I will say again that the original article (about REQUIEM) was limited to the subjects of REQUIEM and the French-Canadians. Even if Lovecraft is very popular in France, and the Province of Quebec, it was not an article about Lovecraft.

I, too, am a Lovecraft fan. You will see an article in a future SF&F JOURNAL about the development of Brian Lumley as an author in the Lovecraft tradition, which article I hope you will find well-researched.

I sympathize with your receipt of manuscripts accompanied by U.S. postal stamps. Perhaps you could place a note that manuscripts from the U.S. should have checks or money orders attached.

About "having a taste for Québec", I have no bumper sticker, nor such collections as you mention, nor t-shirts, not even a Kaptaine Kébec button. I have in-laws and a lot of friends. If that diminishes my qualifications to comment on a fanzine, and the French-Canadians whom I love, so be it!

[Jim's last paragraph refers to that paragraph in Say's letter of 8/9/75 which we omitted on pg. 4. We had forgotten about Jim's letter of 27/9; it was attached to the back of one of two copies we had of Say's letter (not the copy we used for this issue), and we didn't notice it until we were placing both letters in our "action completed" pile. The paragraph was deleted because its tone and content seemed inappropriate to the rest of the letter, but since Jim comments on it above, we will now print the missing paragraph so his comments will make more sense:]

"And comparing feeling for Quebec. 'J'ai le gout du Quebec', as the PQ slogan goes (Do you have a bumper sticker for your car, Mr. Goldfrank?). I had a francophone girlfriend and still have friends in Quebec, both anglophone and francophone. My dozen Gilles Vigneault albums and 80 other francophon and quebecois records from Leclerc, Les Seguin, Ville Enard Blues, etc., and my collections of Poesie Quebecoise, Yvon Deschamps monologues, etc. will match you anyday. I know all 120 bookstores in Montreal and most of the record stores, and while my accent is horrible to Quebec ears I can get along there with my 'Je suis Quebecois' t-shirt and my Kaptaine Kébec button."

[Thus endeth our controversy for this issue (and for good?).]

Now, to shift gears a bit, we have three reviews by Jim Goldfrank (also in order of receipt, which is the order in which he wants them published). The first and third are fanzine reviews, the second a book review:

FANTASY SPECIALIST Summer/75 (annual) (Bruce Robbins, POBox 396, Montreal, PQ H3B 3J7, Canada; 33 pages, available for request or order) --

This is a catalogue/fanzine whose dealer-editor "specializes in items the other North American dealers are either unwilling or unable to sell" and who "only stocks material he thinks worth adding to his own collection".

The catalogue is mostly of French-language material including reprints, fiction and non-fiction from France and from the province of Quebec. The blurbs on books for sale range from a statement of contents, thru reviews to articles. One three-page article relates the problems of getting Pierre Versins' Encyclopedia of the Utopia and of Science Fiction publicized and stocked by dealers in the U.S. Robbins is as much out to inform as to sell books. He recommends for or against items and tells why.

(Cont. next page)

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

The first general item is a chronology of significant SF events 2000 BC to 1959 AD, by Pierre Versins. There is both a short story and an article by Esther Rochon, author of In Homage to Spiders (paper, Montreal, 1974, \$3; a fantasy novel). Esther is "housewife, mother, teacher, and student" as well as active fan and published pro. (Where does she find time?) "Starfish", a simply told French short story, is both logical and shocking. "On the Translation of Lovecraft into French" looks into the defects of the translations, which are quite popular despite them. An interview with Esther in REQUIEM states that she "learned English while reading ANALOG". While the article's English leaves nothing to be desired, it is still less than satisfactory in explaining the beauty of Lovecraft in French.

The two final articles are written in a lively manner and together present an in-depth analysis of the movie Zardoz. One is reprinted from the MONTREAL GAZETTE, the other is by Bruce Robbins.

I recommend this one to English-speaking fans with a reading knowledge of French (and vice versa), who consider themselves prospective customers for French-language books of or dealing with fantasy and science fiction.

En Hommage Aux Ariagnees (In Homage to Spiders), by Esther Rochon (L'Actuelle, 1974, 127 pp., in French. Available from Bruce Robbins, POBox 396, Station B, Montreal, PQ H3B 3J7, Canada, for \$3) --

This strange book, subtitled "Adolescence in an Imaginary Country", is a fantasy with magic not in the plot but in the writing. It has few characters and a simple straightforward plot. It is mostly devoted to the characters' examination of the world, examination of their perceptions of the world, and of their own feelings. It is an examination of reality. In it, as in life, nothing is ever finally resolved.

400 years before the novel opens, the Asven, inhabitants of the Archipelago of Vrenalik, were a mighty race. They raised the Citadel of Frulken the Black, and cut cellars into the rock of the cliffs beneath it. A statue was lost. Without it, the Asven believed that their luck had fled. They ceased to prosper, closed the cellars, and settled down to a bleak existence and eventual doom in their northern country.

The novel opens with the coming of Jouskilliant Green on the twice-a-year boat that links Vrenalik to the rest of the world. He is an expert on the Asven, fleeing his bookish existence in the industrialized and agricultural southern lands. He is met by chief Fekril Candanad, who sees Green's knowledge as a way to improve his people's lot. He is also met by the sorcerer Skaad and the wise woman Oumral.

Despite his ability to relate to the Asven, he sends for texts on agriculture and industry in an effort to disseminate knowledge, and jolt the Asven from their treadmill to oblivion. His work is useless. Not only is he ignored, but only Candanad's influence saves him from being a laughing-stock.

The sorcerer Skaad asks Green to train Skaad's successor, Ivendra, in the knowledge of the south. The training is completed. Green feels frustrated by his lack of accomplishment with the people. He desires only silence, solitude, and obscurity. So be it. He accepts an existence in the cellars beneath the Citadel, to be provisioned by Oumral.

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THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

Skaad dies and Ivendra becomes his successor. His role is to understand and be a witness to reality, and counsel his people. Candanad becomes schizophrenic, and a killer by night. In a lucid moment, he agrees to be killed by Cumral, who does so and then raises Candanad's son Strenid. Ivendra chooses the girl Anar Vranengal as his successor. She comes under his tutelage and that of Cumral.

The Asven birthrate continues to drop. Ivendra tells Anar, "If I cease to hope, who will hope in my place? The important thing is not that I be believed, but that my words be remembered, so that opportunity may not pass us by without anyone recognizing it." It is not the curse of the missing statue but their own apathy that dooms the Asven.

Anar becomes fascinated with the thought of Green, and induces him to leave the cellars where he has now spent 17 years translating Asven books into his own language. Anar learns that the Asven must draw strength from their past cultural roots, but learn the ways of the future from the peoples of the south. Else they will die off or be assimilated. (This may be a commentary on the French-Canadian condition of, say, twenty years ago.)

The day before Green is to depart by boat, he takes Anar on a tour of the cellars, including a visit to a room filled with enormous spiders. Through Green's gift of the cellars that leads her to understand the past, Anar recognizes her powers as a sorceress, to understand and deal with reality. Perhaps now, all will be well with the Asven.

It took this reviewer several days to digest the material after having read it, to decide that it had been fascinating, and that he liked it. It is a philosophical novel that raises more questions than it answers. It is not recommended to an action/adventure-lover, but to a reader who is prepared to read creatively, and think deeply.

GUARD THE NORTH (Daniel Say, Box 65583, Vancouver, BC V5N 5K5, Canada. Avail. for trade, money (not specified), editor's own reasons, or make your own deal. Publication irregular, but often) --

This is 10/75. GTN contains a good many book reviews by the editor and Ms. Sandra Wise. Of special interest are British paperbacks available in Canada, or perhaps you have a source. Although the reviews seem to alternately try to impress and talk down to the reader, they are still written in a lively manner and are informative, hence worth the reading. Some of the other contents are: (a) Cut-and-fold-together models of a hot-air balloon and a space liner; (b) film reviews; (c) a letter column; (d) comments by Stanislaw Lem on SF writing and the SF world (translated from German); (e) a detailed list of reasons why no SF con should ever be held in Vancouver. While reproduction, spelling, and typography are a bit sloppy, this zine's contents may still find interested readers. Try it, you may like it. Incidentally, give the editor credit for being a truefan. During the recent Canadian mail strike, the editor carted this edition down to Washington state for mailing to his U.S. readers. That's dedication! /Strange--our 10/75 copy had no Lem material in it--does Say individualize every copy? --DLM/

Next, an article/trip report/fanzine review, by Jim Goldfrank:

REQUIEM: An Evening with the Editor and His Friends, Plus a Look at REQUIEM #7 --

On a Christmas 1975 visit to Montreal, I called Norbert Spehner, and was promptly invited to a party being given for his circle of friends. I arrived at

(Cont. next page)

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

his home in Longueuil the Saturday evening after Christmas, an hour late. I had driven all around "St. Edredon", the French-Canadian equivalent of East Boondock, West Nowhere, and Chotzeplotze all rolled into one. That will teach me to rush off without my map! The gang was seated around the Spehners' family room. French-Canadian fans are typical of fans anywhere: plain likeable, and willing to discuss anything, especially their favorite literature. Norbert is slightly shorter than average, dark blond, with a pointed beard. His wife Evelyne is a lighter blond and very pretty. Bruce Robbins possesses, like me, a reasonable French for reading and writing, but is not completely at home speaking and listening, particularly in a general conversation. He seems a bit diffident, but it is well worth encouraging him to speak because his knowledge of the science fiction field is vast. Esther Rochon is small and dark-haired, and quick to switch into English when my comprehension lags. Her friendly personality doesn't broadcast the "How great I am..." that one might expect of an author working on her second novel and working on her Ph.D. in math. She works on these while minding her kids. Her novels are indeed a commentary on the French-Canadian social condition, but stand by themselves. Esther sent a copy of En Hommage Aux Ariagnees to Ursula LeGuin, whose fan she is. LeGuin liked it, and saw puns or anagrams in some of the names. "Ivendra" might have been a pun for "il viendra"--"he will come". Not so: the names were chosen because they seemed to fit the characters, and for their euphony.

Norbert's workroom is next to the family room. It is filled with editions mostly in French, but with some in English. French SF publishing seems to be divided into three categories. The first is translations from English or American. Many of these are classic and may appear with a few years' delay. The second comprises really inferior stuff, written in French, hardly even comparable to our pulp writings of the 1930's, although it might use some modern catch-words like "psi", "laser", or "computer". This second class of books is ground out, and bought at an alarming rate. (One publisher issues six new novels a month.) Go buy yourself a copy of Pierre Barbet's Enchanted Planet, published by DAW, if you would like an example. There is also some really high-quality science fiction being written in France and in Canada, but it is as scarce as hen's teeth and hard to come by. When I can get copies of these, reviews will be forthcoming.

Norbert "finally has a justification" for the name of REQUIEM, which was chosen before he ran across the story name in Heinlein's Future History series. That name now serves as a precedent. REQUIEM "is not exactly the fanzine that Norbert would like to publish". It appears in 25 bookstores and must appeal to a wider science fiction reading public than just devoted fans. It should be noted that REQUIEM received an inch of comment in the AMAZING fanzine review column, which included an "*" and a "recommended".

Bruce Robbins is working on a translation of Pierre Versins' Encyclopedie of Science Fiction. This work has a fantastic amount of detail on science fiction themes, authors, and their work. The book is now selling for \$85 and worth it--if I didn't have a family to support. Bruce showed me a column-and-a-half article on Kilgore Trout written as if Trout really existed. In fact, some of the biographical and bibliographical information printed in Venus on the Half Shell seems to have come from the Encyclopedie, which it quotes as a reference (giving as the full name Encyclopedie de l'Utopie, des Voyages Extraordinaires, et de la Science Fiction). I asked whether Versins thinks Trout is for real. "No, Versins just likes a good joke." Bruce illustrated this by showing me an entry about an author who lived from 1946 to 1948.

The party continued with much conversation. Canadian fans are well-informed as to American authors, artists, and fan events. Norbert, in particular, keeps

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THE WIND FROM THE NORTH (Continued) --

up with the news in LOCUS, and he informed me that the third book in Farmer's Riverworld series is to appear in 1976. Evelyne set a beautiful buffet before us, with the masterpiece a quiche lorraine--a dish traditional to that part of France from which the Spehners come.

Time to go. I chauffeured Gaetan Rochon (no relation to Esther) and Maurice Trudeau home, instead of letting them take the Metro. This wasn't altruistic--I didn't want to get lost again. Maurice reads his science fiction in English. He opined that Jack Vance was far less recognized than he deserved to be. "Heinlein is well-known for his theory of the competent man. Vance shows in his Alastor series that a competent man can adapt to any planet or culture (land on his feet, and come out on top of a situation)." We discussed Vance's use of characters' speech constructions to make a culture seem real, and agreed that Vance is a great contemporary author.

It was a fine evening. If Norbert or any of his friends pass by the Washington area, I hope to give them an equally warm welcome.... Which brings us to REQUIEM #7: available from Norbert Spehner, 455 Rue St. Jean, Longueuil, P.Q., Canada J4H 2Z3. It is a French-language bi-monthly, format 8½" x 11", 24 pages in photo-reduced offset, with better than 70 lines per page in a column where there is no artwork. That makes a lot of reading for your \$1, or 6/35, or trade. A scan of the contents reveals: The cover is a rather elaborate space station with the legend "Mosquitos". Lettercol: a single letter speaking of the literary qualities of WEIRD TALES, and continuing on to take a skeptical look at fans. Editorial: where the 'zine is, where it's going. Comic Lovers' Corner: Given that B.D. pronounced "bay day" is the acronym for Bande Dessinee or comic strip, the French title of this column is "Le Coin du Béderaste". Yes, another atrocious pun (chuckle). For them's as likes, graphic arts from all over. Short story: "The Tower of Silence", by Daniel Sernine. The story shifts between first- and third-person as the protagonist penetrates a dour land to find a tower where all sound is absorbed; to find spirits doing a dance of death; to return home pursued by the spirits. Short story: "The Other Morning", by Claudomyr Sauvé. Reflections and reminiscences of the last man on Earth, civilization having been destroyed by robots using human brains for their own purposes. (I've got to get off at these two stories. I philosophically don't like stories of humans as pawns of powers beyond their control. How about some stories of the problem-solver, the adventurer in the universe, or even some swords-and-sorcery? REQUIEM is continually experimenting with contents. For example, some issues have had excellent long articles. Each issue is sure to be different, and I hope to see some short fiction I'll really like.) Indiscretions of Gougou: news and commentary by Québec's patron creature, written with a satiric touch. Fanorama!: some literally huge literary projects going on in Canada include two epic science fantasies: "Tyraael", destined to have 1,500 pages, and "The Cycle of The Wanderer", which the author hopes will make "Tyraael" look thin. Fanorama also includes other short fiction and announcements. Across the Book Jungle: new books announced. Rock-SF-Fantasy: an article by Claudomyr Sauvé studies the influence on rock music by SF and fantasy, citing English, French, U.S., and Italian groups. This issue concludes with reviews of Belgian and French fanzines, and book reviews.

There is something to appeal to every interest here, and overall quality continues high. REQUIEM is an ideal way for the French-reading fan to brush up his French; for us all to remember that there is a world fandom whose primary language is not English; for us to reciprocate the interest that French-Canadian fans show in us.

* * * * *

TALES TO WAG YOUR DOG BY

A Multitude of Realities, by Andrew Darlington.

The artist was trying to recreate a concept on the screen before him. The concept was the death of time.

If time had meant anything to him it would have been three weeks ago that he had conceived the idea. He had concentrated on that idea, the general outlines of the idea, and the hazy shape had appeared on the screen-- the image that was the direct distillation of his thoughts. He had taken his brush and with infinite patience had solidified that outline. At one point he had reshaped his idea, the image had twisted like smoke and had reformed. So the thought took shape.

Next he minimized his concentration into smaller units. Each segment of the whole had moved to the shape he had dictated, and he painted in the finer details. Lastly he added the intricacies of fine detail with a patience that knew no bounds.

For a moment his eyes left the screen to stare at, and beyond, the wall. His eyes were old, yet at peace; they looked to infinity. The walls of the low-roofed tavern that was his home glowed dully with the reflected light of the fire in the grate, which burned enthusiastically. Yet he did not see it. He saw the city, of which his tavern was but a part-- how once it had lived; how time, since then, had died.

The artist returned to his labour, his fingers outlining fine detail. It was then that time was re-awakened from its death, and change returned to the city. The door wrenched open to admit two figures. The still air from beyond was laced with frost; it invaded the room in a sudden, violent inrush. The door closed behind the strangers in government uniforms, and calm returned.

The artist looked up from the art-screen, the hazy outlines fading as he did so, leaving only his bold, intricate paintwork. His eyes absorbed the visitors. The youth was tall by the standards of the race, and darker-skinned. His hair was short, cleanly defined, as could be expected of an emissary of the Capital. The girl wore a long voluminous cloak, with a cowl that covered her face.

"You came in response to my call," said the artist.

"We came to hear your words," replied the emissary of the government, swelled with his own importance. "We came to judge their value--to fit them into the scheme of human knowledge, to reality, against which they must stand or fall."

"You can contribute to the understanding of the universe, which is the ultimate aim of all existence," said the girl.

"I am a master of all knowledge past and future," smiled the artist. "I can tell you the reality of the ground beneath your feet, the air that you inhale, the food that you eat, the stars that control all destiny, the galaxy that turns. I can tell you the truth of the flying cities, their origins, design, their masters. Of the civilizations that sank beneath the waves of time, the empires that strain through the centuries for fulfillment. The globes of light that litter the mountain slope, the knowledge of the crawling creatures upon which you tread, and the symbiosis within you. I can tell you much."

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TALES TO WAG YOUR DOG BY: Darlington (Continued) --

"I hope so, we have travelled far to reap your contribution to the Universal Truth," said the youth as he slumped onto one of the bare wooden benches. "First, though, we shall eat, wash and rest."

"Food shall be served to you--just as your animals shall be stabled, your rooms prepared. I hope that the journey was not too hard--and will not prove fruitless."

"That, surely, is up to you," said the girl. Turning to the youth, she asked, "Why waste time eating now? We have a task to fulfill."

"We also have stomachs to fill," he replied, smiling in satisfaction at his attempted pun.

The meal, in shallow dishes of simple rice spiced with vegetables, was served by a woman of indeterminate age or station, who could have been the old man's daughter, mistress, or even his wife; there was no introduction or explanation of their relationship, and this bothered the analytical mind of the dark-haired youth. The girl, however, having made the gesture of protest, removed her cloak and cowl, and readily sat down to eat. The meal was consumed in a silence broken only by the rhythmic champing of the old man, which faintly annoyed his "guests". A breach of the social rituals of etiquette was an affront to Universal Order, and as such was almost unforgiveable.

As the plates were being removed, the girl asked: "Where does your knowledge come from, bred in such a city of decay, stagnation, lack of order as this?"

"Where is knowledge found? In gleaming systems of dust-free corridors of the Capital? Locked, filed within its electric minds, or in amongst the careless garbage dropped in the street? This city is old, its knowledge ancient, bred of centuries. Its knowledge is inherent in its decay."

The city had had a past, he reflected. Once, when the warmth had coaxed flowers to bloom freely, it had boasted a fine harbor and much trade among the people of the islands beyond the horizon. It had at first fringed the shore of the ocean that had been its livelihood, then had grown inland towards the continental ice-sheets. Time was motion, he thought. Time was change and incident. Without change time becomes no more than a philosopher's concept. When each day was different there was a yesterday as distinct from today and tomorrow. When there was no change there was only a limitless present. The city had known no change for many centuries. The ice-wastes had spread. Their fingers had approached slowly, inexorably. The hoar frost that was its advance guard was replaced by light snow. The flowers bloomed less profusely, or not at all. Fewer people came to the city; the flow of activity became a trickle, then dried up. The city had slipped effortlessly into a peaceful and elongated old age. Time had died, for there was no change.

"What knowledge?" prompted the government emissary.

The artist thought quickly. "There was a continent," he indicated vaguely in the direction of the sea. "For many centuries its peoples lived in peace, their great cities prospered. But their land was low-lying; the sea encroached with every passing year despite expert irrigation. At length, in desperation, they built many of their cities upon great platforms raised on piles from the marshy ground, yet still the waters rose until there was no land. Still frighten-

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TALES TO WAG YOUR DOG BY: Darlington (Continued) --

ed as the water level rose, the people constructed giant bladders of helium beneath the platforms. The cities, bouyed by the gases, rose slowly, thousands of feet into the sky, where they could be navigated over land or sea alike--giant ships of the sky. They can still be seen every now and then as they pass above."

The audience listened in stunned disbelief.

"But that's rubbish! You brought us all these miles, on our first field mission to collate Truth, to impart these lies. Any tertiary knowledge of historical geography will disprove even the existence of such a 'lost' continent."

"You must realize," added the girl, "that such heresy against Truth is punishable by death."

"What makes you think I was speaking of this geological time-cycle, or even this reality?"

"What other reality is there?"

"There is a multitude of realities. For example, many generations ago a man out travelling through the mountains became lost. In search of shelter he entered a cave, followed its twisting course deep into the ground until he perceived a circle of light far ahead. He emerged from what was, apparently, the same cave that he had entered so many hours' walk ago. Yet the scenery was strangely different; there were great globes of pure light hanging from the trees, littering the hillsides and the sky. He had, in fact, discovered an alternative reality that exists beneath the one we think of as the globe "Earth". Our world is, in fact, a shell, beneath the surface of which exists a second shell, also thinking itself to be the 'only reality', and also inhabited--only by conscious globes of light. Beneath it is yet another shell, and so on to an infinity that the rational mind finds inconceivable--in the same way that the sky, the stars we see, are merely the underside of the shell above us."

The girl turned in eloquent silence, and moved to the stairs where the promised room waited. The youth, catching for a moment the gleam of satisfaction in the old man's eyes, waited as the next fantasy was elaborated.

"We conceive time as a constant stream, or a river, flowing from its source in the past to the future, the knife-edge present being transient. This is not so. What we call time is in fact an illusion created by many millions of almost identical worlds, each slightly out of step, to the tune of a split second, with the next. Past, present and future exist simultaneously, rendering such terms meaningless. It is the passage of the pin-prick of human consciousness from 'present' to 'present' that gives the illusion of temporal progression."

The youth looked hard at the half-finished picture on the art-screen before the old artist. The fineness of detail took him by surprise. The images were timeless; there was a pervading air of peace and beauty in it that was like nothing he had ever experienced before. Broadly, the image was a man's face in silhouette, with hair & pores glimpsed where light filtered from an unseen source. The lips grimaced in what may have been agony or ecstasy. Filling the silhouette, emerging from the shadows, were half-figures from a dream-world--a hundred tiny facets, scenes from the life the artist lived, and the lives he dreamed: men and women in strange clothes; animals and men in strange cities of towering minarets and cobbled winding streets. Each tiny scene seemed to live in its dimension, yet merged into a whole--was independent, yet integral. One of the tiny images

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TALES TO WAG YOUR DOG BY: Darlington (Continued) --

represented a warrior, yet there was no harshness or brutality in him. He was crouching on the parapet of fortifications looking out over a sparkling ocean, seemingly lost in its splendour.

Conflicting thoughts assailed the youth. The old man was obviously no fool; yet his "truth" was fiction. One falsity could have been put down to overimagination, yet the stories in themselves were conflicting. There was no consistency.

He turned away, walked to the door, and stepped out into the bitter cold. The street was cobbled, narrow, running gently down to the shore. The cobbles gleamed with dew, edged with silver lichen. Small pools of water, laced with ice, fringed the street. The walls of the buildings around him were covered with ivy. The sun, visible as a pale disk above the distant mountains, cast intertwining shadows amid the creeper, creating a delicate crosshatch of subtle shades and colours.

"No order," he reflected, as he began unhurriedly down the gradient, his echoing footfalls laughing back at him. He paused to gaze at some empty villas that the vines of decay were rapidly engulfing. He stopped to watch a rattling pebble he had dislocated preceding him down the slope. He breathed heavily, and watched his breath dissolve.

Two men in furs and skins emerged from the twilight. Mouthing conversation at each other, they passed into the tangle of confused shadows. It suddenly came to the youth that the rambling and pointless disorder of the sprawling city was efficient in its own way--that the philosophy it reflected was, in fact, an alternative reality to the neat, ordered, well-maintained city in which he had been born and schooled. It was also apparent that a few short hours ago such an observation, for him, would have been impossible. The catalyst had been the confusing paradox of the aged artist.

This was not just a city of decay, of disorder--it was the expression of a vision of reality--just as the imposed ordered symmetry of the Capital mirrored a reality. Which of the two in fact mirrored truth? Order or chaos? He saw with hammer-blow insight that, within the Capital "system", they had been taught to discover the universal truth by measuring the height of mountains, cataloging the many names of insects--imposing upon the world a set of values, a force of order, that did not exist. For reality could not be learned--it must be experienced!

The door of the tavern behind him seemed to open of its own accord. The old man, washed by fire-light, sat over the art-screen. The girl in government uniform sat on a bare bench by the stairs that led upwards.

"We shall pack and leave as soon as day returns," she said, half questioning.

"Not yet--I wish to stay."

He turned to the old man, indicating the carefully constructed picture. "It represents a multitude of realities?"

The artist nodded.

"What is 'the' reality?"

"Reality is the world--a globe as you know, but not convex as you think, but instead concave--the surface being on the inside of the globe. In fact, if it

(Cont. next page)

TALES TO WAG YOUR DOG BY: Darlington (Continued) --

were not for the swirl of stars and planetary bodies at its centre, and the limitations of human vision, it would be possible to see--spread out like a map--the continents and oceans beyond the sky of the other side of the world...."

"What is reality?" pressed the youth.

"Reality is lies," breathed the artist.

An (Untitled) Fragment, by Steve McKinney.

In the day it was only a slightly rutted clay gravel road, leading back through the twisted elder and sour gum bordering the marsh wood on one side, and a half-wild, half-tattered corn field on the other, until it opened into the field that had surrounded the burnt and fallen farm house. His father had lived here long ago when he had been a boy, and horses had pulled a cart across the land at night toward the warm bleak light of kerosene lamp glowing through windows covered only by pull-shades. The spring had been used even then--bubbling up through small grains of sand and flowing unchecked into the marsh wood.

Now, a generation later (which only a pause ago in time would have been like the generation before and the generation to come--but now the haste of the 20th century has removed his world from that of his father by the distance of space ships from horse-drawn wagons)--now an epoch later, as man measures things--he drove across this land at night, one light flashing from the burnt red sour gums in monochronic glare. The pans rattled and lurched in the back, and he briefly considered the ludicrousness of what he was doing--driving back to the spring at night, when dark seemed something malevolent and the black hid the creeping lush of plant that would surely cover all the laboriously carved acres of field--perhaps momentarily halted by an itinerant tractor, but in time advancing again. The night hid this, and now that as he stood light in hand, filling pails at this spring, he could have been anywhere in time but now.

He switched the light off, letting this mood flow in with the warm night and the late fall's katydid sound. There, he thought, would have been the gaunt frame house, and there the barn and the grainery. Goose pimples fingered up his back and neck--self-consciously he thought of planes and rockets, atom power and huge dynamos. But overhead the popular trees sang softly in the low clouds! wind, while the corn rattled and whispered the things they learned from the soil. And theirs was an alien tongue...and he shivered, though October's night was mild.

On sudden compulsion, he walked the night-still path, past his car toward the brambly briar-grown cellar. This was a walk in the dark of cloud-hid night, and though his eyes widened to gather light, they saw only forms of black and lighter dark. But it could have been his own ground, so surely did he tread. Here was where the front door had been; he kicked the still-remaining slate step with his shoe.

Now he stood, eyes accustomed to the dark, and where the house would have been if it still stood he perceived a darker bit of night--perhaps the black of the basement, which gaped open to the sky. He caught this illusion from the corner of his eye and started, instinctively, thrusting out his hand to catch himself. As his hand hit the rough clapboard siding he first felt relief at not falling, and then--the sudden terror of this other time was upon him--the house had fallen a long time ago, he remembered.

(Over)

TALES TO WAG YOUR DOG BY: McKinney (Continued) --

Perhaps someone had fenced it in with wood to keep fools like himself from falling head-first into the rubble, down to the cellar below.

He turned away and back towards his car, laughing softly to himself. How vivid is the imagination, he thought, his mind explaining to itself the still-remaining vestiges of some ancestral caveman's fear of the dark. He wished he had carried his flashlight from the car.

As he walked down the slope towards the spring he hesitated--here was where he had set the gallon jugs and pans, to carry back the cool spring water so he wouldn't have to drink the chlorinated swill that came from the faucets at home. It was not a terror this time, but a chill.... He fingered the wooden bucket in amazement.

Where was the car? He'd left the keys in the switch.... Setting the wooden bucket carefully on the ground, he started to walk out toward the road. Someone was playing a joke; the car was gone. Stolen? Not likely, as battered as it was. When he reached the end of the path there would be the macadam road and telephone poles, his neighbor's home and his own--and lights. Why was it so dark!?

The dark lane seemed interminable, and it was only when he advanced slowly and touched his hands to the bushes that he realized he had come from the farm road onto the through road and across it to the other side. He had slowed as the dark mass of brush in front of him had appeared--but why hadn't he noticed the change from the crunch of gravel to the soft slap of macadam underfoot?

Because this road, too, was gravel.

There is no need to go mad, because I am already insane, he thought. Just turn back once more. It was a longer walk back into the farm, and he was not sure if he dreamed or not. Were car and plane, atom and space, and the rest only imagination, and the yet-to-be?

And as he walked, the breeze blew away the clouds, and moonlight shone down upon the farm. The fields were neat and well-kept, with the brush cleared away to the woods' edge, and the farm house stood mutely silhouetted on the hillside.

He hurried--they would laugh again if he were gone too long to the spring, saying he had been dreaming away his chores. The wooden bucket lay against the springhouse wall.

Editor's Note -- The above was sent us a long time ago, from an old Army buddy, as an example of the kind of thing he was trying to do in turning to writing as a possible career. We've always enjoyed it, and hope you will. ## In this space we had originally typed the first ten lines from T.S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" (from his Four Quartets). We remembered this poem from our college days, and felt it beautifully accented the theme in this fiction section. But the publisher, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., refused permission: "... We are sorry but no excerpts may be reprinted from any of Four Quartets..." so we had to pull and retype and rerun this page. We strongly recommend you find a copy of this poem and read "Burnt Norton" for yourself.... (And we hope we have enough pink paper left to rerun this page; otherwise, you'll find it on orange....)
 -- DLM

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS

I. The Lovecraft Tradition and the Maturity of Brian Lumley, by Jim Goldfrank.

The Lovecraft tradition continues by fits and starts. Most renowned Lovecraftians have either passed on to the next stage of their existence, or are no longer in the business. Let us talk of the living: Robert Bloch, Frank Belknap Long...nothing written recently. J. Ramsey Campbell produced an excellent volume, The Inhabitant of the Lake (Arkham House, 1962), followed by Demons by Daylight (Arkham House, ?), which was neither very Lovecraftian nor very readable. That leaves two who have published recently. One is Lin Carter, whose Dreams from R'lyeh sonnet cycle was published by Arkham House in early 1975; his Stone from Mnar is forthcoming according to a reference seen (and lost).

Brian Lumley seems to be the foremost HPL protagonist in terms of volume and mass exposure. His books are: The Caller of the Black (Arkham, 1971), Beneath the Moors (Arkham, 1974), Burrowers Beneath (DAW, 1974), and Transition of Titus Crowe (DAW, 1975).

What elements make a Lovecraft-tradition story? Feeling, style, and use of the Cthulhu Mythos. A spine-chilling feeling is the essence for the reader. Horror lurks before, behind, and beside us, both in space and time. Most of us are saved from utter madness by our ignorance of it. The Lovecraft reader experiences a delicious thrill in what...may not be fiction. (Exceptions to the horror-preoccupied Lovecraft are to be found in the joyful dreams of Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath and The Silver Key.) The style is affected and archaic, with much use of italics, quotes, and exclamation points to give horrific emphasis. The Cthulhu Mythos was the principal subject of most of Lovecraft's work. HPL said that "All my stories, unconnected as they may be, are based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by other races who, in practising black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on the Outside ever ready to take possession of this Earth again."

The Mythos is essentially a parallel of the Judaeo-Christian tradition for which Lovecraft had little use--the casting of rebellious angels from Heaven, who became devils to tempt and plague Man. The Mythos even has a reverse Jesus symbol: the god YOG-SOTHOTH's son, born of woman, cries "HELP! HELP!...ff--ff--ff-FATHER! FATHER! YOG-SOTHOTH!" at the moment of its destruction. In the Mythos, the benign Elder Gods were the "first inhabitants of stellar space". (Lin Carter) The Great Old Ones, almost as powerful but purely evil, rebelled against them. These Great Old Ones were imprisoned beneath the earth, or its oceans, on planets of far stars, or in dimensions adjoining ours. Not much was ever said of the Elder Gods until Brian Lumley incorporated them into Transition of Titus Crowe. The Great Old Ones have been dealt with and expanded by Clark Ashton Smith, Howard Long, Derleth, Bloch, Kuttner, Ramsey Campbell, Lin Carter, and more. These creatures never quit trying to make a comeback, which makes for a lot of horror stories.

In Beneath the Moors (\$6; 145 pp.), Lumley relies heavily on the style. He focuses on Bokrug, "A god worshipped in the pre-human city of Ib", who had "the likeness of a water lizard". (Carter) Unfortunately, Lumley never achieves the chilling feeling. The result is pretty much one of boredom, and the book goes unrecommended. Here are its main points: Ib had a sister city, Lh-Yib, which survives to this day beneath the moors of Yorkshire. The young of the race of Bokrug spend their childhood on the surface of Earth, resembling human children, until the time of their First Change in their early twenties. They metamorphose into lizard form until it is time for them to bear offspring. They temporarily assume human form, which is then relinquished forever at the time of the Second Change. A professor stumbles into Lh-Yib, and has 10 years' worth of underground

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VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: I. The Lovecraft Tradition . . . (Cont) --

adventures. Upon his return, he is turned over to a psychiatrist, who tapes his recollections. Naturally they are the ravings of a madman. Then the professor is abducted in a thoroughly professional manner by "Things! No they weren't people. They walked upright but they were almost like, well-crocodiles!--but with humanish faces!"

While Beneath the Moors is true to the tradition in style and use of the Mythos, the feeling is not there. Beneath the Moors does not make it as a book.

Meanwhile, Lumley has been developing as a Lovecraftian. I can only assume that Burrowers Beneath was written later. BB incorporates modern science, copious Mythos references, and less emphasis on the affected style. (See opposing points of view on BB by Jim Goldfrank and Don D'Amassa in SOTWJ 136/4-5.) BB shows the beginning of battle by organized men of science against the Cthulhu Cycle Deities. Their chief adversary is Shudde M'ell, a subterranean monstrosity that is the brain-child of Lumley. "Some success against them (the Great Old Ones) is achieved in this novel, but victory is never final, and sequels seem called for." (Goldfrank: op. cit.) BB introduces us to Henri-Laurent de Marigny and Titus Crowe, both English. De Marigny serves mostly as a confidant: a convenient sounding-board for Crowe.

These characters continue in Transition of Titus Crowe (\$1.50; 253 pp.), which is the best Lumley yet. But ToTC has other Lovecraftian roots. Through the Gates of the Silver Key, by HPL & E. Hoffman Price, tells of the return to Earth of Randolph Carter after galactic and multi-dimensional wanderings. In the meantime, Carter's heirs, "all distant cousins", were trying to divvy up his estate. "Now the time for the apportionment had come, and this vast, strange room in New Orleans was to be the scene of the arrangements. It was the home of Etienne-Laurent de Marigny--the distinguished student of mysteries and Eastern antiquities. . . In a deep niche on one side (of the room) there ticked a curious coffin-shaped clock whose four hands did not move in consonance with any time system known on this planet." A Hindoo (sic) tells the story of Randolph Carter since his disappearance. It turns out that he is Randolph Carter, in an alien body. The Hindoo disguise was the best he could do to look terrestrial. He announces his identity as Carter, and in the uproar that follows "the figure entered the coffin-shaped case and pulled the door shut after it. De Marigny could no longer be restrained, but when he reached and opened the clock it was empty."

We see that Lumley's de Marigny is the son of the New Orleans mystic, and the clock that figures so prominently is ToTC originates in the HPL-Price epic. At the closing of BB, Crowe and de Marigny were assaulted by air elementals. They took refuge in the clock. De Marigny shows up 10 years later, a few moments of subjective time, having been "thrown overboard" from the clock which is now a time-, space-, and dimension-hopping vehicle. Crowe later appears to tell his adventure.

ToTC can't really be said to have a plot. It is a series of episodes occurring on far-future Earth, and in Earth's Cretaceous period, for starters. Crowe crashes on a far planet, though without damage to the clock, and is reconstructed body and soul by robots. There is a sojourn in Roman Britain, which itself is interrupted by a visit to "The Great Race", those sage pre-human beings from HPL's The Shadow Out of Time. At one point the clock is falling into a black hole when a psychic sending tells him to switch the clock into another dimension. At last Crowe finds himself on Elysia, home of the Elder Gods and their Chosen. The latter includes Crowe's love, Tiana--human, but with Elder Gods in her family

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tree. Crowe returns to Earth, to find de Marigny, tape his story, and take de Marigny back to Elysia. There is a final revelation: the Elder Gods have chosen mankind to be the guardians of the universe, and put the Cthulhu Cycle Deities in their place. Since these deities have had losses on Earth, but also certain victories, we can see that ToTC is an interlude in the story of mankind's struggle against them...and that there are certain to be more novels in this series.

In ToTC, Lumley has forsaken pure horror, or the attempt for it. He has forsaken the slavish adherence to Lovecraft's style that made Beneath the Moors so ineffective. He has developed a style that tends to beautiful more than to gruesome description. His characterization of the friendly dragons (lithping lithardth) of Elysia is pure delight. The subject matter leans more toward science fiction than weird horror. Love and joy now take their place in the Lovecraft universe.

Lumley still draws extensively on the Cthulhu Mythos, but the feeling and style are his own. ToTC's good descriptive writing shows that Lumley has matured as a Lovecraftian by maturing as Brian Lumley. ToTC is recommended to anyone with a taste for Lovecraft, and who can enjoy description as well as action.

II. Guest Review, by Joe Sanders (The Best From Orbit, ed. Damon Knight (Berkley-Putnam; \$7.95)).

In Orbit #1, Knight remarks that he had started out "to put together a collection of unpublished stories good enough to stand beside an anthology of classic science fiction". He adds, though, that as he was assembling the stories he realized that what he really wanted was more than just "stories by master craftsmen. They are about something; they are not the sort of stories you forget as soon as you have read them. They are as entertaining as any story written 'purely to entertain'--but they do more than that. Every one is a voyage of discovery into strange places of the universe and of the human psyche. Every one has that quality of unexpected rightness that marks a really good story." In the introduction to The Best From Orbit, Knight further emphasizes his scorn of science fiction that is "predictable, mediocre, and safe. . . good science fiction is not and never has been like that--it is not a pony cart but a roller coaster." Knight believes that Orbit's grow in their own way, often surprising him by their final shape. But he stresses that he has attempted both to publish good stories and to publish stories that will shake the science fiction firmament. Of course these two goals may or may not fit together. What happens if an editor must choose between a polished but conventional story and a flawed but exciting experiment? Generally, and especially in his most recent collections, Knight would take the latter. The excerpted correspondence Knight published between the stories in Best partially justifies this choice--it shows Knight pressuring the writers to polish their stories, and it shows the writers insisting that they know what they're trying to do and they can't do it any other way. Sometimes, the results also justify Knight's increasing preference for daring, unsettling stories. And sometimes not.

To examine these 28 stories from the first 10 volumes of Orbit, I'll have to do a weaving, darting, apparently shapeless review. I'll have to proceed unevenly, with abrupt digressions. I'll have to discuss stories in order sometimes, at other times group them by author or by type. Knight claims that the stories in Best are the very best/most dynamic he's published; that means I'll have to ask how successful each piece is as a story/experiment. Bear with me, though. Knight is trying to do something very important. It's important to see how well he's succeeded.

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Knight could hardly have begun his collection with a more attractive story than Richard McKenna's "The Secret Place". Although it's not exactly experimental--McKenna didn't introduce the low-key approach to stiff storytelling--this is a very ingratiating story of a "time doorway" into prehuman times created/perceived by the gameplaying of two children, which intersects the even more hostile world of modern war-mentality science. It is not an adventure story (through the doorway, grab the loot, and back home; look out, cave girl, I'll save you from the dinosaur; etc.). In fact, the events that would make the big scene in an adventure tale are just sketched in after the real climax: The hero's realization that he is responsible for what's happening and his decision to act on his responsibility. It's a story of character growth, then, and an enjoyable reading experience.

"The Loolies Are Here" by Allison Rice is another success. Very funny story. In one of the letters printed between stories as a kind of running commentary, Knight mentions that the first version he saw had no real ending to it. The published version has just enough windup to ease Knight's conscience about buying it. No matter. Lovely concrete details carry "Loolies" triumphantly. Speaking as a male sometimes-homemaker, I find it appallingly hilarious. (Digression, here. In general, the humorous stories in this collection work better than the serious ones. I suspect this is because, by definition, humor is a pleasurable realization of the difference between what readers expected to happen and what actually has happened, between the ideal and the actual. Thus the content and form of a humorous piece can be almost anything its creator wishes, as long as it can be distanced from what was expected far enough for laughter yet stays within a loose, first-bounce relationship. To illustrate: a fat banker strutting along the sidewalk, then stepping on a banana peel and doing a backflip, would be comedy; a crippled old lady doing the same thing and lying there moaning would be tragedy; a pregnant woman tumbling head over heels and hanging suspended in mid-air while she gives birth to a psychedelic florist's shop would be neither, though it might be a nice way to start the sequel to 2001. Anyway, the humorous stories in Best are, proportionately, more successful than the serious ones. They are very different stories. "The Hole on the Corner" by R.A. Lafferty is beautiful comic speculation on alternative universes. "Don't Wash the Carats" by Philip José Farmer is bawdy, uncomfortable black humor. Carol Carr's "Look You Think You've Got Troubles" is a successful vaudeville schtick. And "Rite of Spring" by Avram Davidson is a glimpse of a Charles Addamish household. Good unsettling fun, all. In humor, the experiments in form or content are easier to take in. We aren't thrown for a loss as easily.)

The third story in the book is Ted Thomas' "The Doctor", an interesting story but not altogether successful. In the introductory letters, Knight and Thomas go back and forth about how much explanation is needed to get the doctor back in prehistoric times. (Another digression: In all these exchanges, Knight comes off as professional and perceptive. I don't think that's because of selective editing; Knight is professional and perceptive. That's worth keeping in mind as we continue through this collection.) It seems, judging by the story, that they finally agreed that very little background was really needed, the important thing being how the doctor adjusted to being stranded with the cave people. Maybe. It is an interesting story, but to make sense of it finally you must assume that the man can rationalize the murder of his son because the people are beginning to accept his role as a healer--that, in other words, he is so identified with that role that the people closest to him are secondary. That could be, and the cave people's lack of language may help along those lines; without language, it might be hard to hold thoughts in the mind, perhaps limiting the cave people's ability

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to relate to the doctor. The doctor himself might find the memory of his former life, which he can think about in words, more real/important than the boy who represents the mess in which he's presently trapped. Maybe, maybe. To be sure of that, though, I'd at least need more background of the character. It would have to be a longer, different story. As it is, it remains slightly unconvincing.

Next comes "Baby, You Were Great" by Kate Wilhelm. Since Wilhelm has three stories in this collection, it makes sense to talk about them together. This first one is another interesting but unsatisfactory story. Wilhelm herself suggests part of the reason in her introduction to The Infinity Box, a collection of her short stories recently published by Harper: "I kept getting so many disparate images, scenes, actions that demanded to be part of this story ["The Infinity Box"] that for a time I despaired of ever weaving them together, but then I discovered when I put them side by side, in an order of sorts, the edges of all these pieces seemed to flow together to make a whole. As soon as I knew I had the shape of a story I began to work on it and no longer worried about too many parts." I've noticed several of Wilhelm's stories tend to pile in all the ideas the story will hold, then add some more for luck. Such stories feel like they should have been longer to give the ideas room to breathe. "Baby, You Were Great" features, if that's the word, extrapolation on mass media entertainment, the guilt/desire of the inventor, the victimization of the star--all nicely enough done but crammed together too tightly. (Looking at the story from another perspective, in DELAPE'S F&SF REVIEW, Susan Wood calls attention to the heroine's strong human reaction to what's being done to her. That also would have made a fine center for the story, but I don't think it has room to stand out effectively.) In her other two stories here, "The Planners" and "The Encounter", Wilhelm has found a more effective way to employ her approach to writing: Fantasmagorical narratives, in which things are free to crowd in--and drop out--at will, as characters fantasize momentarily, then slip back into realistic presentation. "The Planners" is a good story in its own quiet way. Very little happens completely during the story, yet I can't imagine another way in which the theme of research into intelligence and its multiple consequences for the planner could have been handled as well or at all. As entertainment, though, I prefer "The Encounter", a marvellous isolated-by-the-blizzard horror story that may not be end-with-horror at all, depending on how you view the main character. In the three stories then, we can see a writer experimenting effectively, to discover a way around handicaps. That kind of growth is at least partial justification for what Knight is doing.

Which brings us to Joanna Russ. Her first story is "I Gave Her Sack and Sherry". It is also the first story in Best that is clearly unconventional enough to be disconcerting. I think it fails as a story, though it may be justifiable as an experiment. One of the things Russ has been tinkering with lately is a kind of lecturer-narrator who obtrudes more or less consistently between the reader and the action, making wry comments as she goes along. That's difficult to get used to, if you're reading for story, but it can be fun. I think that she uses the approach to generally good advantage in The Female Man, though that book is unfortunately mislabeled a "novel" and confused the blazes out of Lester del Rey as a result; actually it's a booklength meditation, with dramatic interludes, and makes pretty lively reading as that. In reading The Female Man, though, you'll have to forget about plot and just let the writer's intelligence pull you along. In "Sack and Sherry", Russ tries the approach with a sword-and-seaspray adventure plot. The two parts of the story clash: The action keeps trying to stand up and go somewhere and the style keeps knocking it flat. I wish I could feel, as Knight does, that Russ has succeeded in revitalizing the heroic fantasy form. I'd say that transmogrifying the form would be more accurate. She may have created a convincing female lead; I couldn't get close enough to the charac-

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ter to tell. "Sack and Sherry" is primarily important, then, as an experiment that clears the way for the creation of a later work. For that, okay. (Russ' later story, "Gleepsite", remains blankly cryptic to me.)

"Mother to the World" by Richard Wilson follows the Russ story. I wonder if Knight did that deliberately.... If the Russ is largely designed to undercut masculine notions about Big Strong Hemen and Helpless Little Women, one cherished masculine fantasy, Wilson uses the closely related theme of the one surviving man and woman on Earth.... For most male readers, that means a story about the new Adam, founding father, patriarch, boss. And the woman in Wilson's story is a physically desirable but completely docile and dependent retarded girl. Hot damn! Stepford or bust.... But not really. For one thing, unlike Thomas, Wilson gives enough of his lead character's background to present him as a person. (In a letter Knight urges Wilson not to delete those scenes; he's dead right.) For another, the situation is developed carefully and thoroughly. It becomes not just a male fantasy but a real love story, and like most real love stories it deals honestly with the rationalizations and compromises that make love possible. Some things I can't quite see--like why the characters simply go naked when they wear out the clothes they have on, in this world of chiggers and poison ivy--but on the whole this is a convincingly, satisfyingly developed story that manages to probe a stereotype for its potential truth.

Gene Wolfe, on the other hand, very seldom chooses to open up his stories all the way. They remain enigmatic, with a hard kernel still nagging the reader's attention at the end. Despite that, Wolfe is one of the new writers I most respect. Of Wolfe's first story, "The Changeling", Knight writes "It seems to mean something to me, although I would hate to have to explain what and the whole thing hangs together so tightly that I can't imagine wanting you to change a word." I agree. And that goes for "The Island of Dr. Death and Other Stories" too. Wolfe's stories are so well done--so detailed, well-paced, and provided with interesting characters--that I look forward to returning to them again, trying to extend myself into their secrets.

Bob Silverberg has made me feel like a fool lately; after several years of sneering at Silverberg as a hack/commercial writer with pretensions I now find him one of the most interesting writers around. I still think that some of his earlier critical successes were because of just that kind of amazement--"Did Silverberg do that one?"--but it's becoming clear now that Silverberg can do just about anything he wants to. He's paid his dues; now he is free to use the skills he picked up laborously. "Passengers", his story in Best, is a piece of dues-paying, skill-building. It is--again--the kind of necessary experiment a writer must try if he wants to grow. In particular, it's the kind of deeply-felt angst piece that every young writer has to let out at some time. At some stage in his budding career, the writer wonders if the game is really worth the effort; he's confident he can make it, but he wonders whether behind every new wonder lurks mere blandness. (Some people, like Arthur Kopit, make a critical splash with such a work and never recover from it; some people, like George Alec Effinger, just keep doing it over and over.) The mood pervades this story. "Passengers" is not a bad story, understand, but it's always struck me as too calculated a piece of emotional manipulation; the characters are too obviously doomed from the beginning. They play out their assigned parts well enough, but so what? Silverberg has written much better--the most that can be said of "Passengers" is that perhaps the experience of writing it helped him to write better the next time.

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And that, as I've mentioned already, is a possible justification for Knight's slant in Orbit. Encouraging new writers to do their best and older writers to do better is a worthwhile thing. In some cases, as noted above, Orbit has been part of the growth of some notable people. However, there are some difficulties to that view. Work that excites by its novelty or by the sense that the writer is tackling something new that he/she never has had the nerve to try before--that's awfully intoxicating to the editor, but it may do nothing for a reader from outside. That's why, after struggling through the first Clarion collection, I gave up on the series: Wilson printed a lot of inferior stories because he was so involved in what the writers were trying to do and because he wanted to believe in their potential. Knight is infinitely more perceptive and professional, but I think he also tends to take the will for the deed, the intention to do something unique for the accomplishment. Even in this collection of the best from Orbit.

Each story deserves to be judged by itself--not by how it contributed to the writer's growth, how it purged his tensions and frustrations and made him feel better, or how it paid for his wife's operation. To make this judgment easier, in the last part of Best we shall find several stories by newer writers, who haven't exactly made overwhelming reputations yet. It will be easier to discuss them in isolation.

But we're not there yet. First we have Harlan Ellison, R.A. Lafferty, and Ursula K. Le Guin to talk about. All three would have gone their own way without encouragement--Lafferty and Le Guin because they simply are what they are, Ellison because he thrives on opposition. In an introductory letter to "The Hole in the Corner" Lafferty comments that he hasn't found science fiction easy to write. One would never know it from his stories. I picture him, as Bradbury once described Sturgeon, living contentedly under a bridge somewhere and guessing what the outside world is like from the fragments of riverbank he can see and the sound of traffic overhead. Of all the unique people in stf, Lafferty is the only one who turns out consistently unique, unexpectedly outrageous stories. Of his second story here, "Continued on Next Rock", I'll pause for a moment to quote myself, from STARLING #25:

"On its face, the story is about a group of archaeologists who dig up love notes, incredibly varied in language and age, all addressed to one of their party by a mysterious, timeless stranger. Eventually Magdalen, the girl, is crushed by falling rock--corresponding, it seems, to solidified time--and Anteros, the man, becomes a stone figure waiting to be uncovered in the dig. A curious plot, perplexing on its own terms; a reader can impose general coherence on it only by straining. I think that's part of Lafferty's point. The archaeologists are trying to make a coherent picture out of scattered traces of man's presence in time. Magdalen has her own wider and more sensual kind of knowledge, which the others begin to glimpse. And finally the expedition's activities are infiltrated and diverted by another effort to pull together human meaning out of fragments--Anteros' notes to Magdalen, which stretch human understanding even farther by their form and content:

"I am the earth, woolier than wolves and rougher than rocks. I am the bog earth that sucks you in. You cannot give, you cannot take, you cannot love, you think there is something else, you think there is a sky-bridge you may loiter on without crashing down. I am bristled-bear earth, there is no other . . . I am the rotting red earth. Live

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in the morning or die in the morning, but remember that love in death is better than no love at all.'

"Anteros' images are deliberately nonhuman and many are consciously unpleasant. But he insists that the one he loves must accept this much of life, too. He represents the impermanent, wordless side of life; yet he composes a love song and etches it in flint. The tension between those drives, in Magdalen, creates an explosion that destroys her--at least in this time and place--and imprisons Anteros in stone, while most of the others get back to their efforts to comprehend a narrow, comfortable version of reality.

"The story is rough, obscure, and deeply moving. In fact, it fits the description of the stone Anteros on the story's last page:

"The carving was fascinating in its miserable passion, his stony love unrequited. He was earth, he was earth itself. Whatever period the carving belonged to, it was outstanding in its power.'

"By concentrating on efforts to create a meaningful vision, in this story as elsewhere, it seems to me that Lafferty is commenting on art as an especially individual expression of human desire to comprehend experience.

"Is that what the story is about? I think so, in part. But many threads are left dangling in my rapid reading, and anyway 'Continued on the Next Rock' is impressive not as an explanation but as a story. The ideas it hints, suggests, and implants stay with a reader because they're part of a disturbing story. Lafferty's characters are unpredictable, crotchety, babbling, amazed or amused at the unexpectedness of life, and alternately delighted and horrified at being alive. But they do try to make sense of it all. Lafferty is showing that even though an artist is doomed to personal frustration and artistic failure, he still tries to grasp and communicate the widest sense of life that he can. And that's important, certainly, but it's the way Lafferty says it that makes the point newly moving. Lafferty is able to involve a reader in an activity of reading that dramatizes the shaping activity he's writing about. That's quite an accomplishment. Lafferty is quite an artist."

Yes, I still think Lafferty is one of the brightest, strangest talents in our field. I don't think he's ever been an experimenter, because I don't think he started from a basis in conventional fiction. He doesn't have to break himself loose from confining rules; he was born free.

Ursula K. Le Guin's "The End" is an allegory, I suppose. At least the characters behave sometimes like human beings, sometimes like figures carrying out a ritual. She is so good a writer, though--and so rich a person--that the human traits of the characters lead us to accept their strangeness as we ponder the fate they find. A puzzling, memorable story carrying the writer's sense of its worth. Le Guin has grown as a writer, too, but she seems to be her own best editor and critic. She respects her own talent, her characters, and her readers. She doesn't need to be goaded into doing her best.

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Ellison, though, has really felt oppressed by stf's boundaries. And because he is not the man to submit to such restriction, he has tried to overcome confining limitations, for the sake of himself and others. The results have been healthy. As a writer, Ellison has used that feeling of oppression and confinement to very good advantage in stories like "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream", "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes", and others. His stories in this collection are "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin" and "One Life, Furnished in Early Poverty". "Goblin" is a nightmare fantasy/drug-trip paranoia. It's a curious, dreamy story that drifts deeper and deeper into horror. There's little characterization, but perhaps that would be irrelevant anyway, since the people are converting themselves into things as fast as they can. "Life" is a wish-fulfillment/time-travel story, very effective in its presentation of yearning for/loathing of the author's smalltown childhood; he hates the smallness of that life, but savors what he finds when he's able to go back as an adult.... Again, Ellison's passions carry the story.

The stories I've talked about so far, then, are by people who have made it. That can be part of a circular argument: They made it so they deserved any and all encouragement to make it.... Now, let's look at the really new people Knight is encouraging:

That means looking at eight stories: "The Time Machine" by Langdon Jones, "The Big Flash" by Norman Spinrad, "Jim and Mary G." by James Sallis, "House of Air" by Gardner R. Dozois, "The Bystander" by Thomas Lee Wharton, "Binaries" by James Sallis, "Al" by Carol Emshwiller, and "Life from Berchtesgaden" by George Alec Effinger. Where to begin....

Well, Spinrad already has made some reputation as a flashy writer and is now making one as a craftsman. He shows justification for both in "The Big Flash", but in this case I'm afraid it's unfortunate that form and content fit together so well. For this is a flashy story in more ways than one. Spinrad's subject is a government plan to sell the public on the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam which taps a mass craving for self-destruction (the ol' death wish) and leads up to an orgasm of A-bomb throwings. The form is effective, switching from place to place in a countdown; the writing is sharp and clear. However, the idea leaves me thoroughly unconvinced. As might be expected of a writer so devoted to all-out assault on the senses. Spinrad overestimates the ease with which media can manipulate us and the competence of those working with media. As with the Thomas story earlier, the idea might have been made to work--though it would have taken a longer, different story.

On the other hand, I rather like "Al" as it is. Not that I'm altogether certain what the story means--something about individual vs. collective approaches to art--but as the story shimmers along--radiant, mystical, clothed in white samite--it becomes an interesting artifact, a thing in itself.

And I'd say the same of "The Time Machine", except that I'm not sure whether what I take to be the point is worth the effort Jones gives it: Are we imprisoned or liberated by our imagination? A skillfully done thing, but with rather less going on than meets the eye.

"Jim and Mary G" and "The Bystander" are skillful, too, but they aren't stf. Nohow, no way. Of the first story, Knight explains to a reader that it "is set in a parallel world in which children can be disposed of like pets. If that isn't science fiction, what is?" But I don't find the parallel world bit in the story. The story hit me hard--me with the three little boys--but the reason it hits is that things like that happen here, now. Like the freaked-out parents who fried

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their kid alive in a skillet, stopped only when neighbors got bothered by the screams and called the cops. Terrible, terrible things are done in this world; there's no reason to consider Sallis' story stf. ("Binaries" is an interesting experiment in style, but not much story.) "The Bystander" is more obviously straight crime fiction. Well enough done, though it sags into straight exposition toward the end--but what is it doing here? (Digression: Let's not worry about "speculative fiction", etc. All fiction is speculative. But in an anthology that is trying to widen the horizons of stf, we should still be able to expect material within those widened horizons, not random bits from all over.) These stories deserved to be printed. They even deserved printing in a prestige publication. Still, they're out of place here.

"House of Air" is recognizably stf. It contains a moment of truth, too, a sharp perception about powerless frustration, but unfortunately that comes after the caricature of a narrator has chewed the cardboard plot almost to shreds. I don't believe in the narrator, and I don't believe in the elaborate rigmarole that has him tapped, either. Dozois had a point to make; he should have written a story to go with it.

Finally--Effinger, with a typically intriguing but self-indulgent story. In a letter, Knight warns him against mixing wildly different kinds of story. Here, at the end of a story showing a German woman's consciousness zapped back to her girlish body before the war and the guilt, Effinger has the girl's mother explain that they don't know what ever happened to their comatose daughter: "We dusted her features often, and changed the flowers monthly, but otherwise we rarely thought of her. Then, one day, she was gone.... Perhaps we merely misplaced her." Okay, it shows the speaker's insensitivity, but it pulls the story out of shape. If that's the kind of people you're dealing with, questions of guilt become superfluous. If Effinger's suggesting that the girl grew through suffering.... No, I don't think so; it was just a cute line, too good to pass up even if it hurt the story.

So, of the 28 stories in The Best From Orbit, I'd say that 16 deserved to be there. What most of the others have in common is the writer's desire to push himself or the field a step or five further than he/she or it had dared to go. Maybe that's admirable in itself; however, we're not talking about admirable human traits but about stories. Such a story becomes interesting to someone else--someone not personally involved in the writing and editing--only if it pulls the gamble off. Participants in the activity naturally slip into a kind of pleasant self-delusion. This is the mood in which people applaud the contents of college literary magazines, especially the mentors--teachers, sponsors, editors--who believe that what the writers want to do is worthwhile. But even if there's some excuse for accepting the attempt for the accomplishment, printing literary experiments, there's less for reprinting them if their actual value was as growing experiences. Knight believes that these stories are successful. I think he's wrong, and I think it's clear why, with the best will in the world, he misjudges these earnest attempts to do something he thinks needs doing. Maybe Knight will be right in the long run if these writers go on to do the work he believes they can. Eventually. Meanwhile he has faith. As he says here, he buys stories nervously, then finds that they somehow fit together to make an Orbit. Perhaps that's the only way to encourage experiments--with trust. One should not, however, demand too exalted a trust from the paying audience. All in all, The Best From Orbit is worth buying. Each new Orbit, though, requires a greater and greater act of faith.

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Cont.) --III. Legacies of UNKNOWN, by Jim Goldfrank.

Despite the fact that UNKNOWN folded in 1943 from lack of both paper and profit, many enthusiastic fans consider it a magazine to which no other has ever come remotely close. Top science fiction authors' names were commonplace on the contents pages: Henry Kuttner, Fritz Leiber, A.E. van Vogt, L. Ron Hubbard, Theodore Sturgeon, and Nelson Bond are only a few that come to mind. John Campbell imposed the same discipline upon their fantasy writing for UNKNOWN that he did upon their SF writing for ASTOUNDING. A story might be based upon assumptions of reality far different from those of our mundane world. But once the author had established those rules and assumptions, he had to play fair and stick by them. The story had to be internally consistent.

UNKNOWN is not forgotten. Crumbly old copies command a mint of money, and reprints occasionally crop up. Here are looks at two of them:

The Sorcerer's Ship, by Hannes Bok (Ballantine, 1969; 1st pub. 12/42; 95¢; 205 pp.).

Here's a note on inflation: This novel occupied 61 pages of the 130-page bed-sheet-size UNKNOWN WORLDS in 1942, and included many full- and part-page illus by the author--and all for a quarter. The 1969 paperback sold for less than a dollar. If Ballantine reprints it, they would charge \$1.50 by today's prices, and ghod-knows-what by tomorrow's.

Here is a novel that is clearly a product of its time. Its basic theme is liberty-versus-tyranny. Its world contains two large islands, a few scarcely known small ones, and nothing else but ocean. Nanich is free under its ruler Princess Siwara. The good of the people, education, and research are respected. In Koph, despotism rules a slave populace. As Neville Chamberlain traveled to Munich, so did Princess Siwara voyage to Koph to bargain for freedom from Koph aggression. One of her counselors was a counterpart of Churchill: "Better for Nanich to give up every last one of its lives than to pay tribute to Koph." Her other counselor has his own deal going with Koph to betray his princess and nation. Gene, from New York, suddenly finds himself adrift at sea in Siwara's world. Siwara's ship en route to Koph rescues him. When he recovers, the Churchill counterpart tells Gene to make Siwara love him and persuade her not to deal with Koph. Gene falls in love with Siwara without half trying. The woman in Siwara struggles to love Gene, while the Princess cannot allow herself to love. The woman wins, and of such stuff are fairy tales made. A Koph ship attacks Siwara's vessel to prevent her from returning to Nanich to prepare for the coming war. Siwara's ship escapes in a storm, but finds itself in unknown seas. They find an island with an immense deserted city. There is one immortal inhabitant--Yanuk is a childlike fisherman with a wobbly paunch and a crested head. He possesses minor sorcerous powers. Gene, Siwara, and Yanuk summon Orcher, an intelligence manifested as a blue radiance who is--not quite--a god. He sends them back to Nanich, promising to return at their dire need. They arrive barely before the Koph invasion fleet. Having lost the battle, Siwara and Gene manage to summon Orcher, who returns to destroy the Kophite's might. The island of Koph rebels against its masters. Now Nanich and Koph will be states of a single democracy. The people find their princess and new prince an embarrassment. Gene and Siwara will return with Yanuk to his island. They will learn from Yanuk and Orcher. One day they will be free to roam the universe.

The style is simple and straightforward, with each word chosen for its visual effect. However, the world is a naive, simplistic one, and the characters have little depth. The Sorcerer's Ship is briefly enjoyable, and not memorable.

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More detailed and complex are the worlds of:

The Compleat Enchanter: The Magical Misadventures of Harold Shea, by L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt (SFBC, 1975; 341 pp.).

By stating logical propositions, Shea magicks himself to worlds where reality is based on magic, not science. Pistol and flashlight do not function, but sword and spell do. The first stop is the world of Norse mythology before the time of the final battle between Gods and Giants, Ragnarok. Shea helps get the Gods and their magical weapons all together. The reader meets giants who speak like gangsters' underlings, the man in the giants' clink who hourly repeats "Yngvi is a louse." This last is occasionally repeated in fandom, but the authors have never come up with an explanation for its profound meaning. After Shea magicks a troll's nose down to normal size with a spell that was not expected to work, Shea conjures up broomsticks for himself and his companion, the god Heimdall. Then he has to figure out how to control them--and so on back to Earth and a hearty meal.

Shea's second trip is to the world of Spenser's Faerie Queen, where noble knights and ladies forever oppose enchanterers. The world's own internal logic holds with every detail in place: When the enchanterers have a convention, their program consists of Old English words and Gothic Script. Shea escapes back to Earth with the huntress Belphebe to become his wife. He shortly loses her to the world of Orlando Furioso and The Castle of Iron. Belphebe has lost her memory and become her counterpart in that legend, Belphegor. Shea's mission is to woo her, win her, and restore her memory while managing to dodge the blows of warring Franks and Saracens, and their respective wizards.

Instead of a unified plot, each of the three short novels that have been consolidated into this book is a series of one goofed-up situation after another. Shea always emerges victorious, or at least with a whole skin, by fighting with sword and bumbling enchantment. These enchantments backfire, work other than as expected, or sometimes work too well, but always according to the inescapable magic laws of the world in which they take place.

Compleat Enchanter is full of excitement, laughs, and surprises. The fantasy lover will eagerly turn each page of this harum-scarum adventure to see what brand of logical foolishness awaits him on the other side.

IV. Another Look at--The World of Fanzines: A Special Form of Communication (by Fredric Wertham, M.D.; 144 pp.; \$10; 1973; Southern Illinois Univ. Press; 7 1/2" x 9 1/2"), by Edward Wood.

Only three books have been written about fandom in its first 44 years: Moskowitz's, Warner's, and Dr. Fredric Wertham's. Surely Wertham's book is worth more than Richard Lupoff's one-sentence review in ALGOL #22 May 1974: "If you don't know anything at all about fanzines, this book will tell you almost as much about them as you could learn by reading a stack, but not quite."

Let me try my own one-sentence review: This dreadfully overpriced book is a broad but superficial view of fan magazines as they existed in the late '60's and early '70's, with an overemphasis on the comic-book branch and an amazingly uncritical admiration of all the rest.

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Yet what better job should one expect of an outsider peeking into an essentially closed club? How can he know of the scandals, the bitter feuds, the traditions, the minutiae so dear to the experienced fan? Only by a prolonged and really intensive study of fandom in all of its branches would an outsider have a ghost of a chance of looking at the fandom phenomena with the required critical sense.

There are 32 pages of illustrations (two on a page for some of them). Considering some of the absolutely splendid illustrations that could have been chosen, the ones selected are undistinguished. There are two each from LOCUS and YANDRO and at least eight from comic book fan magazines.

The 100 pages of text are divided into 18 very short sections beginning with "Introducing Fanzines" and ending with "The Significance of Fanzines". Dr. Wertham makes many perceptive statements about fan magazines and quotes liberally from many of them. He knows about The Immortal Storm and All Our Yesterdays, but there is no mention of The Fancyclopedia, A Sense of FAPA or even of The Fanzine Index by Evans and Pavlat. (The Fanzine Index came out in sections between 1952 and 1959 and was republished for the late Harold Palmer Piser in 1965 by the Goulsons. It covered the field from 1930 through 1952 and contained just over 2,000 titles.) Wertham quotes: "It has been estimated that since their beginning some seven thousand titles have been published (GRANFALLOON 9)." If over 200 different titles a year have been produced from 1953 to 1973, this estimate might be fairly good.

The section titles "Origin and Early History" correctly outlines the origins of the fan magazine. Unfortunately, Wertham quotes from GRANFALLOON 9 and ALGOL 17 about THE COMET when he might just as easily have directly quoted from Moskowitz's The Immortal Storm. Here he is committing the unscholarly sin of quoting from secondary and tertiary sources when primary sources are available.

The section "Some Fanzines and Their Places of Origin" uses six pages to list 213 titles which the good doctor claims to have in his collection (note the small sample analysis--213 out of 7,000, or approx. 1 out of 33....). While there are a few Hugo-winners among them, the knowledgeable fan will wonder about the whereabouts of such titles as RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, FANTASY COMMENTATOR, SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST, LE ZOMBIE, QUANDRY, etc., etc. Dr. Wertham admits that the oldest fan magazine he has in his collection dates from 1940. Is the whole first decade of fan magazines a mystery except through hearsay? The list does not justify six pages. One or two pages would have sufficed to show the ingenious titles and where they originated.

Just to show you that this reviewer read the book carefully (three times), Sam Moskowitz's name is misspelled on page 34 and in the index but is spelled correctly on pages 39 and 45. However, the index omits mention of the entry on page 45.

A few quotes to give you the flavor of the book:

"... The three pillars on which the whole structure of fanzines essentially rests: science fiction, fantasy and adventure fiction, comic strips and comic books" (page 44)

Apparently Dr. Wertham is thinking of his book Seduction of the Innocent, because only since the publication of Dick Lupoff's XERO in the early '60's have comics become anything more than a peripheral matter in fan magazines. Of course comics are big in the comic fan magazines, but these, too, are a development of the late '50's and the early '60's.

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"Against the background of our general polluted communication system fanzines stand out as a special form of communication. They are a unique unmanaged type of publication free from outside interference, without control or manipulation from above, without censorship, visible or invisible." (from the dustjacket; not to be found as such in the text)

If the above is true, then how do fan magazines differ from the mundane amateur press publications which existed years before our fandom?

"I felt that it was essentially unpolluted by the greed, the arrogance, and the hypocrisy that has invaded so much of our intellectual life." (page 35)

Fans no longer just drink water--they also walk upon it! Shades of Francis Towner Laney. Wertham paints the fan far taller than he actually is.

"These unheralded voices, not loud and strident, not ponderous but cheerful, deserve to be heard." (pages 35-6)

Are Sam Moskowitz and Edward Wood listening?

"'Fanzine Publishing' is a friendship-making activity" (ESCAPE quoted in ALTER EGO 5). 'The fanzine' writes Neal Pozner in COMIC FANDOM MONTHLY 7, 'usually is concerned with friendliness.'" (page 131)

The first World Convention in New York, the Breen Affair, D. Bruce Berry and Earl Kemp, "Ah Sweet Idiocy", the lawsuits, the fights, the libelous slams...ah yes, the fan magazines do reek of friendship.

This quoting from the book could go on and on, but the above should be adequate.

In the section "Fanzine Words", Wertham lists 44 words/terms and their definitions, but the term Ur-fanzines used on pages 40 and 132 is undefined. (I don't know what it is either, and I've only been reading and collecting fan magazines 25 years...!)

Wertham does point out the fun of publishing fan magazines and the enormous talent displayed in some of them. At any rate, the man is no fool!

Wertham doesn't point out that there are styles and trends within the fan magazines. At times, serconism is all the rage, at other times it is the in-thing to ignore science fiction and reserve one's intellectual powers for things faannish. (One has become too sophisticated for fundamentals.) Sometimes, fiction is in, at other times it is out--on the grounds that if it is good enough to be published at all, it should be published in the professional magazines, and if it isn't good enough, it shouldn't be published at all. The face of fandom and of the fan magazines changes with time and circumstances. It is not some unchanging monolithic entity.

Dr. Wertham has given us his embarrassingly favorable picture of the fan magazines by giving quotes and amplifying them with additional appropriate remarks from the mundane world. Another person, by selectively quoting from other fan magazines, could give a completely different picture of the "fanzine world". The objective interested outsider is then faced with "What is the truth about fandom/

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fan magazines?" Certainly it is a valid question, and it deserves an answer if one is possible.

Knowing the narcissism that exists in the fannish soul, it is suggested that if fans cannot afford to buy this book, they can at least ask their local library to get a copy. It is a book worth reading.

V. A Non-Hero; Two Would-Be Books, by Jim Goldfrank.

Kane "defied our creator in that forgotten age of paradise; he was doomed to wander eternally through the savage world of his making, driven by his curse, branded an outcast by the mark of death that lighted his eyes." Kane's world is not Earth and has its own gods. What the first brother-slayer is doing there, or who the forgotten god who cursed him is, is not clear. Kane is immortal, amoral, living through centuries by his killer instinct and his need to escape the boredom that immortality confers. His passing is like that of a storm that may bring needed rain--he has his decent moments; or it may wreak tremendous damage. "Kane was a large man--not much over six feet, but massively built. From an immense barrel of a chest set atop pillarlike legs, Kane's mighty arms hung like great corded tree limbs. His hands were of great size and strength--a strangler's hands." Since the stream of sword and sorcery is running thin, a fan might be tempted to buy two books featuring such a novel protagonist. But beware! Kane's author is no less treacherous than Kane himself. The potential in these books either goes astray or is not realized. "It was his eyes that branded him as an outsider. No man looked into Kane's eyes and forgot them. Cold blue eyes in which lurked the wild gleam of insanity, hellish fires of crazed destruction and bloodshed. The look of death. Eyes of a born killer. The mark of Kane."

Kane first appears in Death Angel's Shadow, by Karl Edward Wagner (Warner Paperback Library, 1973, 205 pp., 95¢). The first of this collection of three novellas is "Reflections for the Winter of My Soul". A werewolf wipes out the dwellers of a snowbound castle one by one. Who is the creature? After many false leads in this mystery, only Kane and the werewolf remain to confront each other. In "Cold Light" a soldier is dedicated to the eradication of evil from his world, and never mind the innocents who get in his way. He chooses Kane for what turns out to be his last project. "Mirage" is the story of Kane and the sexy lady vampire to whom he almost succumbs.

Both books are pretentious, particularly as regards style. They include a great deal of grandiose description. They contain some good fantasy concepts: the sword and sorcery non-hero, an alien intelligence with parallels to Cthulhu, human sorcery versus alien science. The characters become trivial. Their speech is alternately archaic and a low grade of slang. Where a consistently employed style of speech can make a world and its inhabitants seem real (Jack Vance and André Norton have carried off this sort of thing with honors), we are never certain whether Kane's world is Valhalla or Joisey City. Wagner makes a mighty try with his world and characters, and collapses in all four directions.

Bloodstone (Warner Paperback Library, 1975, 303 pp., \$1.50) has words to send even a literate person to the dictionary. Kane gains possession of a ring that is one-half of a crystalline alien that draws both upon organic life and the energy of the cosmos. While he seeks to use the alien to master the world, Bloodstone has plans of its own. Kane sets two city states against one another, destroys one, then battles the other with his army of frog folk, and zombies created by the entity. Kane becomes Bloodstone's slave for a time, finally destroys it, and

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disappears to await the next novel. Description runs amuck. With some of the good concepts here, the author might have made a better book in either of two ways: He might have cleaned up the description, and stuck to the action which sometimes becomes fascinating; or he might have enlarged upon the alien's parallels with Cthulhu, or built in some good-versus-evil symbolism like Tolkien. As it is, Kane and his world remain overblown shams. Verb Sap recommends Bloodstone, but only weakly, to a sword and sorcery fan going cold turkey.

VI. Triplet Review: Dhalgren, by Samuel R. Delany (Bantam Books; 1/75; \$1.95; 879 pp.).

Reviewer, Gil Gaier (repr. PHOSPHENE #1, with permission):

Dhalgren's plot is simple, the concepts are not: Kid comes into the city of Bellona some time after a catastrophe had rent it; the bulk of the inhabitants are dead or have fled. Those remaining are enjoying squandering their lives and feeding on one another. The city has become a crucible and the people are in permanent group therapy. Here Kid finds a home, love, leadership, fame, plenty of respect, and all the sex he can handle; he even becomes an author. Then, after 879 pages, Kid leaves town and the book is ended, but the story is not; there are enough mysteries, questions, and discoveries remaining to seriously involve you in the question of whether the second reading will clarify matters. Delany made his Kid of mythic stuff; he used him as if too much straightforwardness would destroy his creation. Thus you never get a real grip on Kid. Was his last adventure a fantasy dream or reality? It's difficult for even Kid to decide since reality keeps changing for him: time, distances, and the order of events.

Certainly the action/adventure was not the story's major attraction; the fine quick character strokes, often clear and well-pointed, weren't either. The story's main attraction lies in the time/place descriptions, the colorful scenes, the words which force you to sink into events and feel the raw tempo of a new life.

Delany's great creation is the fascinating city of Bellona: it's a ghetto world; it's a plague city after the plague; it's a catalyst; it's the great spot on the face of Jupiter. YET, I believe Bellona is Delany's concept of heaven! Some evidence: all dress as they please since there are no temperature changes, no rain, no wind, no glaring sun; there are no police, no law--no real "great" need for any either; food, water, liquor, shelter is available for the taking; there is no work to be done other than what you want to do; there is almost total sexual permissiveness (and sex is available in most ways any time it's needed), no venereal diseases (lord help them if there had been a case or two), and no restrictive puritan ethic; no animals (except one) to interfere with the human emphasis; gone is humanity's need for property and possessions (individuals seem to possess very little--considering there is a whole city to be looted); there are all kinds of people from which to choose to associate; enough unusual happenings occur to keep one from getting bored; people seem to smell good (even to the breath) and taste good in spite of layers of dirt, sweat, gizzum, and whatall. (Aside from porno books, this is the most ANTI-FASTIDIOUS and "GROSS" novel I've ever read. In fact, every hundred pages or so I got this craving to take a shower, wash out my mouth, and get laid.)

Delany's ultimate preoccupation is with sex. Admittedly the inhabitants of his Bellona like to party, eat, drink, lounge around, work a bit, and enjoy each others' company. But Delany's major attacks are on the boundaries of the readers'

(Cont. next page)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: VI. Triplet Review (Cont) --

sexual permissiveness. Through his characters and their exploits he challenges the limits you've set; he tests them with scenes of candor, and grim, funky kinky-ness, and sensual episodes dealing with couples, threesomes, and groups/heterosexuality, bisexuality, and homosexuality. Reading Dhalgren is like groping a bared live wire--you get the full AC/DC charge. Its cumulative effect will depend on how involved you can become and how flexible your sexual attitudes are. (Ultimately I got to the point where I could hear a small voice deep inside saying: if he's going to eat it, the least he could do is wash it off first.) You come away from certain scenes feeling you've just watched an x-rated movie. Most of our sexual fantasies are gnawed on. Down to the bone. Dhalgren's not going to bend any straight arrows, but they'll know they've been twanged in somebody's bow.

Delany thinks, reacts, and writes lyrically; he uses poetic techniques again and again to sound continuous melodic undertones. Time after time you find them: assonance, consonance, alliteration, rhyme, direct repetition, and cadences which mirror the words' meaning. Here is one of Delany's sentences rearranged to point up his mastery of sound repetition. It's awe-inspiring:

of grace	"Remembering	not	a	moment
laced		but	a	moment
	with	it,	I	am thrown
	back		on a	present
where only			of the	senses
the intensity				
can justify	this	warmth,		
	the	look		
of shadow				
on her shoulder,		light	on her	hip,
a reflection on the	blackened			
	glass,	light		up
from below." (652)				

Also among his achievements are his stunning similes and metaphores. They are pandemic and warmly appropriate at each appearance. Here are a few random samples:

"... a window sill set with glass teeth like an extinguished jack-o-lantern . . ." (23)

"He wondered if she heard the question mark on his sentence, small as a period." (32)

"... while a white sun made a silver pin cushion in the tree tops . . ." (216)

Delany's use of the "unnecessary detail" has devastating effect. Often a point need not be made, but being made illuminates the scene and makes it intimate and visual: "He took it, saluted Kid with a fork with twisted tines, then dropped his shoulders and shoveled."

Dhalgren is filled with the author's self-indulgence, flamboyant images, incomplete thoughts and characters; his city which conspires to make myths true (p. 278); his enigmatic mysteries; his games with words, names, and situations. Delany tests our metal (usually silver); he hides himself in his own shadow; he says less than he has to say.

But if you have patience, can stand ambiguity, and are permissive concerning others' sexual activities, you'll revel in Kid's guided tour through Delany's heaven...er...Bellona.

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: VI. Triplet Review (Cont) --

Reviewer, Darrell Schweitzer (repr. CONCERT 7/75, w/permission):

Bantam Books has just issued a new game called Dhalgren, and everybody in science fiction circles is playing it. The book has sold something like a half-a-million copies since January, and the game played with it is called How Far Did You Get? It's an endurance contest, you see. A few people stop in the first chapter, a few stop after a hundred pages, and the breaking point for most seems to be about p. 500. A very few make it to the end, and they are either people who want to prove they can do it or book reviewers who feel a certain sense of duty.

This all takes some explanation. Dhalgren was certainly one of the most eagerly awaited books the field has ever known. Delany, formerly one of SF's most talented practitioners, has an impressive record of awards and nominations behind him, and a body of consistently above-average and quite often brilliant work to his credit. So when he fell silent in 1968 and word got around that he was working on a massive novel, the connoisseurs were expecting a rare treat.

What they got is a story about a character called variously Kidd, Kid, and Kydd, who wanders into the city of Bellona, somewhere in the Midwest, in which reality is breaking down. An unspecified disaster has left Bellona slowly burning and depleted of most of its inhabitants. Utilities work or don't work with no logical consistency. Two moons appear in the sky, and occasionally a huge red sun rises and sets, never twice in the same direction. Kid spends most of his time in the company of a gang of "scorpions", who wear light projectors which enable them to appear in monstrous shapes. He engages in an amazing amount of sex involving every imaginable permutation, writes a book of poetry, has literary discussions with an astronaut and a poet, and every once in a while tries to figure out what is going on (but doesn't work very hard at it). He's the intellectual of the group. Everybody else sticks to sex. In the end he leaves Bellona, and a vaguely defined cycle starts again.

It says something when you can synopsise a book of this length in a single paragraph. You couldn't do that with War and Peace, for example, because of the complexity. But Dhalgren has no complexity. It just rambles on and on in a very readable style, with occasional flashes of inspiration buried in large heaps of meaningless trivia. Parts of it are highly erotic, often pornographic in the strictest sense, meaning that they arouse prurient interests (i.e., give you a hard-on) without having any redeeming social value (i.e., no intellectual content). By traditional definition it isn't even a story, because there is no plot development, no character change, no thematic development. Meaningless anecdote piles upon meaningless anecdote, until even the sex becomes boring and the book ceases to function in the previously mentioned manner. There is a plethora of symbols, but they fail to expand, illuminate, compare, suggest, or serve any other function aside from hanging around like arty Christmas tree ornaments.

Delany, I think, has failed to remember the lesson discussed by Thomas Wolfe in "The Story of a Novel", and that is that even if a piece of writing is the author's best, if it doesn't have anything to do with the story, it must be ruthlessly excised. Easily three-fourths of Dhalgren has nothing to do with anything and should be cut out. If the book were 175 pages long it would lose nothing and be a lot more interesting, although even then it might seem diluted. There really isn't enough idea- or character-content in Dhalgren to sustain anything longer than a novelette.

This is certainly Delany's worst (and only genuinely bad) book, and it's the most disappointing thing to hit science fiction since Robert Heinlein made a com-

(Cont. next page)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: VI. Triplet Review (Cont) --

plete fool of himself a few years back with I Will Fear No Evil. Heinlein showed that he was artistically exhausted, that he had written himself out. I hope the same thing hasn't happened to Delany. All I can say about Dhalgren is that it is a monument to self-indulgence and is only recommended to masochists.

Reviewer, Bill Hixon:

I've begun this three times now. I imagine that's small indication of the book's effect. Sam Delany's books are never easy to read, review or evaluate. Perhaps that's why they give pleasure; I don't know.

Here before (alongside) me is nearly 900 pages of incredible novel. Four years of Delany's life, in bits and pieces, are collected within. There is no single coherent plot (that is, so far as I've witnessed through two readings). There are several swirling subplottings involving the main character, Kid, and a cast of dozens.

This work has all the trappings of a plague journal (Delany's final section title included)--a woeful tale of end-of-the-worldly disaster. The setting for all this is the blasted landscape of the town of Bellona, wilting under the threat of a dying sun.

A tipoff for finding some answers to the riddles that pervade this work can be found in the opening quote: "You have confused the true and the real." Consulting Webster's makes this much more cogent if one considers the definitions of reality and truth. (Of late, I fear, one does not necessarily relate to the other.)

To make that last a bit clearer, it appears that Delany has attempted a multi-layered work, wherein reader participation is demanded to discern any personal "truth" from the supplied (Delany's) "reality". Standing alongside Dhalgren superficially leaves one with a horde of well-drawn characters muddling through an incomplete setting of doom. Interacting with Dhalgren, one finds several levels of the characters' conscious attempts to grasp the enormity of what may be happening to them. Disturbing throughout are very apparent contradictions in both the characters and their actions.

What makes this trip worse is not the length--it's the overall impression that the manuscript remains unfinished. The errors in plotting, if that's what they are, along with some blatant reversals, make the journey with Delany's Kid through Gotterdammerung all the more depressing.

VII. Series, Series, Series, by Michael Walsh.

Argh...series, series, series.... To be quite frank when I came across these books (actually they were thrust upon me by the Narsty Editor or whatever he is known as...but that's another story), I wasn't too sure what to do with them. I mean, should I go back and read the other books previous to them, or should I just forge ahead and read them? To me a series of novels concerning one individual or group of individuals is a double-edged sword. First, they allow quick reader-identification and it gives the author a chance to earn more money and/or allows him to develop as a writer and to work on the character (of course, this is the ideal solution). The other side of the sword is this: the series will drag on long after it should have ended, or quite possibly the author is saddled with a creation that won't die--like Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes.

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: VII. Series, Series, Series (Cont) --

I have nothing against trilogies or even tetralogies, for I view them as nothing more than one (giant) novel in three books. The Lord of the Rings is an example of this, while I believe that Perry Rhodan is not one giant novel--it's just a series of novels tied together by common characters. E.E. Smith's Lensman books I would tend to put in the category of "giant novel"--certainly from Galactic Patrol onwards. Having gotten that off my chest, let me move on to these books I'm supposed to be reviewing.

The Durdane Trilogy (The Anome (Dell #00441; '73; 95¢; 224 pp.), The Brave Free Men (Dell #01708; '73; 95¢; 251 pp.), and The Asutra (Dell #03175; '74; 95¢; 204 pp.), by Jack Vance, falls into the "giant novel" category, for they are concerned with one main character: Gastel Etzwane. Vance has created one of his typical worlds, full of color and excitement, with the unexpected lurking behind every page. He is one of the few authors I know of who can get away with the use of footnotes. Let me give you an example, from the first book (page 6):

"Ahulph: a half-intelligent biped autochthonous to Durdane, ranging wild in the backlands and wildernesses, on occasion tamed, bred and crossbred for a variety of uses, from unskilled labor and portage to house pets. When sick, the ahulph exudes a detestable odor that excites even itself to complaint."

Now that is a nice short, concise and interesting bit of description! There are many more like that in the three books.

The Durdane books are concerned with Gastel Etzwane and how he alters the ways of his home continent, Shant, and eventually of Durdane. His rise to power is because of the fact that the ancient power of Shant's ruler, the Faceless Man, is doing nothing to repel the invading Roguskhoi--a rather singleminded animal that is bent upon ravaging the country and any females about. (The office of the Faceless Man, let it be known, was created so that the ruler of Shant--the Faceless Man--would not be known and therefore would be under no pressure or fear of revolt.) This power is derived from the torcs worn by all the people of Shant; these torcs are color-coded, and the Anome--as the Faceless Man is called--has the device that can set off an explosive and terminate the trouble-maker.

All this is just a bare sketch of the first book. The remaining two develop things further and logically. It's only toward the end of The Brave Free Men that one learns the truth about the Roguskhoi, and in The Asutra the full truth is disclosed. This trilogy may not be the best thing Vance has done (The Dying Earth remains his best work), but it definitely ranks high.

The Ginger Star (Ballantine #23963; '74; \$1.25; 186 pp.), by Leigh Brackett, is the first of a series about Eric John Stark. (Well, not quite the first; way back in 1964 Ace published a double, The Secret of Sinharat/People of the Talisman, about the same character, only he was adventuring on Mars rather than on Skaith.) I have not read the Ace double (#M-101, currently available in a 95¢ edition), but I may, as the current novel contains no reference to Stark's stay on Mars--just the fact that he was orphaned on Mercury (the one that doesn't rotate, in another universe) and brought up there by the dying race and named N'Chaka, the Man-Without-a-Tribe. He was civilized by Simon Ashton, who became his father-figure.

Ashton went to Skaith in response to a message from the newly opened Consulate that help was needed; he disappeared soon after landing. Stark goes to Skaith in

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a completely "unofficial" capacity to try to find his friend. Needless to say, he is in trouble as soon as he lands. The planet--or at least the area shown to us--is a socialized society. Nobody is starving, but no one has that much freedom. The laws of the Lords Protector are enforced by a group called the Wandsmen (it seems that the Lords Protector were originally intended as a benevolent dictatorship, but have since gotten a bit heavy-handed). One of Stark's major obstacles is the isolationism that is a part of the society. Not that everyone is against him--a lot of people would like to get off the planet, but the Lords Protector won't allow them to do so, for most of those who wish to leave are those who are forced to support the indolent Farers (the Farers are the youths, who are living in a world of sensuality and day-by-day pleasure).

Since I haven't read the second book in the series (mainly because it won't be out until October and this is being written the beginning of August), I can not say if this is going to linger on and on. I hope that Brackett gets Ashton and Stark off-planet as soon as possible (the only series I can think of at the moment that has remained on one planet is Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover novels, and those are concerned not so much with a continuing character as with the planet, which itself is sort of a continuing character). I also hope that Brackett develops Stark a little more as time goes by, to try to add some dimension to this Conan/Tarzan figure. He is interesting, but only time will tell if he is successful.

I enjoyed The Ginger Star. If you've just finished a Malzberg novel, read this--it will ease your mind and you'll enjoy the adventure, as old-fashioned as it might be.

Yes, Merlin's Ring (Ballantine #24010; '74; \$1.95; 366 pp.) by H. Warner Munn is long and expensive, and Carter's introduction is typically Carterish. If you've read Once and Future King or Mary Stewart's two books on Arthur and Merlin then this is average reading, length-wise. I'm still trying to form an opinion on it. If you are a fantasy freak, then this is a must. If you've read the two previous books in the series (King of the World's Edge, originally published by WEIRD TALES in 1939 and reprinted by Ace (#44-152) in 1966, and The Ship from Atlantis, first publication by Ace (#G-618) in 1967), then you are trapped into reading this. It is about Gwalchmai and his love for Gwennice, who survived the ending of Atlantis. Gwalchmai has a Quest--he has to find a true Christian monarch, to whom to reveal the existence of the New World--and that is a bit of a problem. You see, Gwalchmai's father set sail for the New World, as England was under attack by the Saxons. The father is anxious that this new land be given a Christian monarch. Gwalchmai has many an adventure, and at the end of the second book he is frozen, and by the time of Merlin's Ring his icy tomb is part of a glacier about to collapse into the Atlantic. For the next couple of centuries he wanders over the world--and I do mean wander!

Since I haven't read the first two books, I can't comment upon them except to say that the change from a 1939 style to a current style might be interesting to experience. (I'm assuming that Munn has changed his style over the years. From what Carter says in the introduction, Munn has been working on this book for a long time, and I can't see how his style could not have changed.)

If you have the spare time to meet assorted creatures and people (the novel ends with Joan of Arc), then read this thing. If you like fantasy with a scope of many centuries and with a strange mixture of Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, Burroughs and possibly Tolkien, then you should enjoy it. This of course is not to say it isn't flawed, but then few novels of the SF or fantasy genres are perfect. This one is a little above-average, novel-wise. Some will say differently, but I enjoyed reading it, and considered my time well-spent.

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS (Continued) --

VIII. The Mote in God's Eye: Three Views (Simon & Schuster; '74; \$9.95; 537 pp.; Pocket Book #80107; 10/75; ~~\$1.95~~; 560 pp.; cover by Ed Soyka; by Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle).

Reviewer, James Lawson:

The Mote in God's Eye is a fascinating, frustrating example of Hugo-class SF. In the tradition of all Galactic Empires, the Hero, the Heroine, the Scientist and the Vice Admiral Commanding His Majesty's Expedition follow up the Second Empire's First Contact with an alien race.

The action/conflict is sustained. The alien Moties are most plausibly detailed. The Empire satisfyingly embodies all our Aristocratic urges. The characters are sharply cut-out cardboard. And the distressingly unrealistic "woman-thing" (Heroine Sally Fowler is the only woman on the contact expedition) is so omnipresent in hard SF as to be expected.

A Motie sub-light probe into Empire space triggers an expedition to the Motie home system--Exploratory and under strict orders to in no way risk the Empire's secrets--especially that of the Alderson FTL drive.

The Question is whether the Empire can permit full-scale commerce with the Moties.

The Motie civilization is OLD...and complex...and suitably unfathomable. It is these aliens which make the novel work. The introduction/analysis of information about them thru their actions and the varying perceptions of the expedition members is beautifully handled.

Vice Admiral Kutuzov's orders to destroy the scientific contact ship should the Moties seize control provide the suspense as it becomes plain that the Moties are attempting just that.

The quest for clues to Motie motivation fascinates. The reader can play Detective--and will be surprised for sure at some of the twists.

The Answer follows appropriately--but comes as something of a let-down; a bit too logical, altruistic and deus ex machina for my tastes.

Convolutd plot development, crisp dialogue (except within thought of a body), Heroes, and a first-rate alien situation give us a novel very much in the mold of The Wanderer, Ringworld, and Rendezvous with Rama--a form which I enjoy despite myself. I award Mote a gold star and figure it to win the Hugo. . . .

Reviewer, Bill Nixon:

With reservations, this lengthy "hard-core" effort by two extremely talented writers strikes me as the finest example of SF to pass this desk all year. Within the covers one finds a galactic stage of action, some of the most enjoyable characters in a long while (most of which are aliens--more later), and a plot within which harbors the promise and fulfillment of tension which rewards those who traverse these five-hundred-odd pages.

Starting with the premise of "first contact" with an alien civilization, adding equal mixtures of inquisitive scientists and wary military and the alien race

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VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: VIII. The Mote in God's Eye (Cont) --

itself with the most vexing of social problems, and you have the once-over basic mix for great storytelling. The depth of the characterization, from Lord Blaine, chief-hero-in-charge, to the "Moties", our aliens, is so complete that one actually sinks into the volume. (At 500+ pages, that's no mean feat!)

The crux of the dilemma stems from the Moties' inability to leave their system while possessing the "required" drive. (What they lack is an energy screen, to protect them from the star nearest "jump" point.) On the human side there exists, at first only for the military, a willingness to keep the situation as it is. The scientific community wishes to study and evaluate the Motie civilization, but all are kept at arm's length to further heighten the mystery.

Discoveries mount as we learn of the Moties' abilities as the Galaxy's finest technicians--able to evaluate, disassemble all manner of equipments, making their operation, in the process, super-efficient. The final key, which is kept hidden beautifully, is the Moties' "cycles". This basic racial drive presents the Moties a true stumbling block to their access to the rest of the universe's trading circles

Throughout the confrontation, all characters--alien and human--are fully cognizant of the awesome responsibilities and conceivable results of their actions. This fact, carried novel-length, kept this reader deep in his recliner for three straight hours. (Evelyn Woods strikes again!)

At the outset we mentioned some reservations. The most evident of these is the treatment of the human female lead, Sally Fowler. Chapter after chapter we are treated to a version of women I thought had been laid to rest. Although a competent anthropologist, Ms. Fowler is held back, openly ignored because of her sex, and generally relegated to "women's" work. There are points in the story where I had come to the conclusion that the story element of a large-scale female character was added on a whim. Thankfully, in fact this is not the case. But my wish remains that the persona in fiction of Sally had been handled with a great deal more realism.

My second reservation was with the religious dictatorship which rules the lives and careers of the human half of this work. The probabilities exist that, 1,000-plus years hence, we may well have this millstone around our civilization's neck. But these probabilities, I feel, are remote. Once again, though, Niven and Pournelle make the whole thing palatable through a near-flawless melding of their many and diverse abilities. For now, this sticks out as the leader for this year's Hugo. (The Hugo, mind you, not the Nebula....)

Reviewer, Don Miller:

Man's first contact with an alien race proves inconclusive, as the alien probe from the Mote arrives with its occupant dead. But all is not in vain, as--armed with the now-certain knowledge that Man is not alone in the universe, a human return expedition to the Mote is arranged, with the warship MacArthur leading the way. A true first contact is established, amidst almost paranoid (and, as events prove, justified) precautions on the part of the humans to insure that their two most precious secrets (the Alderson Drive, which makes interstellar travel possible and the Langston Field, which makes ships and cities using it virtually invulnerable to attack and enables starships to "jump" into the middle of stars without being incinerated) do not fall into alien hands--counterbalanced by a massive deception on the part of the aliens, to give themselves a chance to survive as a culture.

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: VIII. The Mote in God's Eye (Cont) --

That's not much of a plot-summary for a massive, 560-page volume which took us 10 days to read--but it's all you really need. This stimulating tale has set a new standard for the first-contact story, making Leinster's "First Contact" seem trivial in comparison. It deals thoughtfully and intelligently with the entire range of the myriad problems attendant upon a first meeting between two completely alien races with virtually nothing in common, from the problem of communication and understanding through that of mutually exclusive needs and goals.

If the book has a major problem, it is in the characterization. The Moties often come across more effectively than do the shadowy humans. However, we're not sure we really care...the book is long enough as it is, and we're not certain how much a novel such as this would benefit from improved characterization (it is, after all, primarily a book about ideas and galactic-scale problems rather than about people). But even without the kind of characterization which makes outstanding novels into masterpieces, Mote is still a reading experience which one experiences all too infrequently--a book that lovers of "hard-science" science fiction will savor with delight!

. Rating -- 1.

IX. An Experiment.

As an experiment to assist in the development of a system of book evaluation to aid area libraries in deciding what to obtain for their collections, we prepared a questionnaire and passed out copies of it along with copies of Laser Books' free promotional volume of Seeds of Change (by Thomas F. Monteleone; '75; 190 pp.). About 60 copies were handed out to members of a SF/fantasy class we were taking at Montgomery Community College, to members of a mystery fiction class at the same college, and to members of the Potomac River SF Society. Only five questionnaires were returned, so the experiment can not be deemed a success.... Responses from the ones which were returned (individuals will remain anonymous, as promised in the questionnaires) are as follows:

Question 1: Did you enjoy the book? (Yes or No) -- Yes, 3; No, 2.

Question 2: Why? Yesses: (1) "It had a good plot and well-developed story." (2) "The story was related in a stimulating and interesting manner; I enjoyed the action-packed scenes and descriptions of environments, but the story itself lacks cohesiveness and believability; love scenes were trite and unconvincing; upon completing the book I was aware of a feeling of incompleteness. The 'alien ship' (the perfect war machine) was never explained. The reader never discovers where it comes from. Impressed me as unreal. Appears as though the author is writing under duress and has left many aspects of his story undeveloped or underdeveloped. I feel that his characters were a mixture of reality and unreality, not entirely convincing. And I believe this is due to the lack of character development. The story was mediocre and ordinary. Interesting in a calm, ordinary way. Not especially impressive or memorable." (3) "A bit of action, a bit of sociology, reasonably adequate writing." # Noes: (1) "Poor writing. Poor continuity." (2) [blank]

Question 3: Yesses: (1) "Deus ex machina (i.e., the alien spacecraft) is used to this story's disadvantage, which happens all too often in S.F. I can only wish that this story could stand on its own feet and the plot not be so totally dependant on a gift from heaven which the author pulled out of thin air." (2) [was combined with response to Question 2] (3) "Certainly not original, but fairly

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VIENS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: IX. An Experiment (Cont) --

workmanlike. I didn't like some of the questionable science and felt that the cardboard characters showed little emotion. Also they switched allegiances so easily that it was hard to believe anyone can shrug off a lifetime of conditioning that readily." ## Noes: (1) "It would have made a better short story." (2) "I think this story is basically trite, hack fiction. Although for what it is, it's very well done. The writer keeps the action going at a fast pace which is necessary in this sort of writing, but his theme, computers and robots vs. mankind, is very old and he has no new twists on it. Also his characters are pretty much one-dimensional. The story seems to have been inspired by Asimov's Caves of Steel, but while Asimov developed a number of different conflicts in his story, Seeds of Change concerns only one conflict and really has nothing to say about mankind today. I think stories like Seeds of Change would be good for attracting Jr. High-age kids to science fiction, but I would rather see the library acquire the old classics of the '30's and '40's first."

Question 4: Would you recommend that your local library purchase this book for their selves? (Yes or No) -- Yesses (from Ques. 1): (1) "Yes;" (2) "Yes; someone else may enjoy the story more than I did and get more out of it, as well. Personally, I don't think I would recommend the book as an example of effective science fiction." (3) "Yes." ## Noes (from Ques. 1): (1) "No." (2) /not answered directly, but answer was included indirectly in answer to Ques. 3/

Perhaps had Laser chosen a better book for their promotional volume, the response would have been better; it's reputation had already preceded it by the time this experiment was conducted.... We'd like to see a publisher send 10 or 15 copies of some of his forthcoming books, in advance, for us to distribute to interested people at the PRSFS, so we could get a proper test of this system of evaluation. (That is, 10 or 15 copies of each title; the theory behind this system rests upon multiple simultaneous evaluations, rather than single reviews.)

Before we close this section of VR&AS, our own review of Tom's work, repr. from KITTLE PITCHERING HUBBLE DE SHUFF #11:

The story begins in a Citiplex--an interesting conception of the enclosed, self-contained and self-sustaining cities of the future which managed to survive the holocaust of atomic war. There our hero has a high-level position, in which he and the Citiplex computer banks scan the files of Citiplex citizens, looking for signs of potentially deviant behavior, and tagging citizens found to exhibit such signs for immediate elimination. One day he finds his own name is being tagged. He escapes from the Citiplex, aided by outsiders, and joins with them in their desperate war for survival against the Citiplex.

Meanwhile, an alien ship lands on Mars, and the Earth colony stranded there discovers the ship is a virtually invincible battlegewagon and a storehouse of knowledge, left there by an unknown alien race for them to use and learn from. Some of the colonists return to Earth with the ship, where they join forces with the "free" humans on the outside in their struggle with the hive-like Citiplex.

The story starts off well, but the deus ex machina of the alien spaceship, so conveniently turned over to the humans in their hour of need, is out of place in the novel--and the story goes downhill from the time of its introduction. The Citiplexes are the best thing in the book, while the humans are mostly cardboard pasteups going through the motions of the inevitable (from the time the alien ship enters the scene) outcome. By the time the novel ended, we could have cared less who won....

(Over)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: IX. An Experiment (Cont) --

Okay for a quick read sometime when you're feeling bored, but don't expect to be overly stimulated by the experience....

Rating -- 6.

X. Other Reviews.

Reviewer, David Bates:

Fantastic Science Fiction Art: 1926-1954, by Lester del Rey (Ballantine Books # 24731; 9/75; \$5.95). /Special edition available through the SF Book Club. --ed.7

I admire most of Mr. del Rey's works, and this is a fine book...as far as it goes. It shows in color covers of 40 science fiction magazines of the period indicated. The price was reasonable, considering today's prices, and the fine coated stock of its pages (printed on one side only). Every review I have seen so far has been most lavish in its praise.

This book, however, is misrepresentative of its era. There are 18 covers by Frank R. Paul. Paul was excellent for his period, and deserves a book of his own. But 18 out of 40 is a bit much. Also, the magazines represented are the Wonder chain up to STARTLING, etc., and ANALOG/ASTOUNDING, with a few light bows to AMAZING. I can't find more than a few minor quibbles with the selections other than the unevenness and the limited sources from which they were chosen. What about MARVEL? They had some good covers. And PLANET STORIES? DYNAMIC? What about STIRRING or COMET, or SCIENCE FICTION or COSMIC or FUTURE? How about WEIRD TALES or UNCANNY, which had some basic SF covers for their SF novels and serials, as did the old POPULAR and ARGOSY? Why no bow to our Canadian or English magazines? (e.g., TALES OF WONDER, or, in later dates, even THRILLS, INC.? I'm not arguing for the merits of the fiction in THRILLS, INC., but some of the covers were good examples of science fiction art.)

No foreign language science fiction magazines represented? No PLANEET? No NARRICONES TERRIFICAS? No LOS CUENTOS FANTASTICOS? The last was usually pirate, but the others were not, and a true representative of the era should contain at least one example. JULES VERNE MAGAZINETTE? Not a whisper....

I have to conclude that most of the magazine covers included are from fair to excellent choices, but hardly a final word as to the science fiction art from 1926 to 1954. A whisper, not a shout, in a field that must be flamboyant, will stir but few echoes...alas.

GHOST STORIES, by Seiger, Moskowitz, & Howard (Opus Press; '73; pb; illust.; 34 pp.; \$3(?)).

Several covers are reproduced from this now-scarce and elusive magazine. I think all reference guides are of value, some more than others, and this is one of the best. It won't be for every fan, as not every fan will want to collect GHOST STORIES. This publication has a complete index of the magazine from its first issue (July, 1926) to the last (December, 1931/January, 1932) issue.

It is valuable in identifying a pen name of Robert E. Howard (John Taverel), and reprints his story, as well as a short piece by Noble Forrest. Also material by Ellen Glasgow is identified, as well as several WEIRD TALES' contributors such as Nictzin Dyalhis.

(Cont. next page)

VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: X. Other Reviews (Cont) --

So: you have a complete index, a sample story and storyette, some cover illustrations, plus mention of the two recent reprint magazines (True) TWILIGHT TALES (Fall '63) and PRIZE GHOST STORIES ('63), both lasting but one issue each. Sam Moskowitz's article mentions the possibility that a companion to GHOST may have had some fantasy in it (TRUE STRANGE STORIES). I would expect some collector should also check out their companion magazines, RED BLOODED STORIES/TALES OF DANGER and DARING for other possible fantasy/science fiction content.

Excellent publication, and worth the price several times over. Not for every fan, but every deep-dyed collector will find it of use.

Reviewer, Don D'Amassa:

Warlord's World, by Christopher Anvil (DAW Books; \$1.25(?)).

Anvil first introduced Vaughn Roberts, agent of the Interplanetary Patrol, in "Strangers to Paradise", in ANALOG back in 1966. Roberts appeared in eight more stories in the years following, some of which were included in his second book Strangers in Paradise. Roberts is the typical foolishly courageous, two-fisted hero of much SF adventure fiction. The author takes every opportunity to stress how clever Roberts is, even while the plot of the novel hinges on his series of inept actions. Anvil seems at ease with this dichotomy, but the reader soon begins to wonder if Roberts deserves to win.

Festhold is a militarily oriented world. The monarchy is hereditary, but an ascending prince must--upon coming of age--pass a test to prove his fitness to rule. The Regent of Festhold uses modern techniques of psychological conditioning and other sophisticated technological innovations to insure that the current prince fails. Into this maelstrom rushes headlong our hero, who has fallen instantly in love with the Prince's sister. Sound familiar?

Roberts determines to set things right, so the IP provides him with some super technology of their own to overcome that of the Regent. Roberts imposes his personality on the mind of the comatose Prince, and their combined strength overcomes the conditioning. There follows a series of encounters--military and otherwise--in each case resulting in a decisive victory for the Prince, which is then promptly thrown away as a result of Roberts' fumbblings. Each time the Regent is captured, he is released through one oversight or another.

Roberts is eventually forced to intervene directly with an IP starship, but even then only as an over-complicated and more than slightly ridiculous and ineffective diversion. The Prince triumphs, the villain is foiled, the Princess is recruited into the IP, and the reader has probably fallen asleep on page 80.

The Heritage of Hastur, by Marion Zimmer Bradley (DAW Books; \$1.25(?)).

This most recent Darkover novel (and the longest--380 pages) is set fairly early in the series, and tells of the early adulthood of Regis Hastur, the most powerful man on Darkover in many of the other novels, and Lew Alton, who figured predominantly in The Sword of Aldones. With the possible exception of the last novel, this is the best book Bradley has given us, perhaps because the greater length of the novel allowed better characterization and provided a fuller view of the planet itself. For whatever reason, this chronicle of Regis Hastur's attempts to come to terms with his own personality and the strangely anachronistic culture into which he is born is a well-written adventure story about believable human beings. The Somyrn psi powers figure predominantly in the plots and subplots, but

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VIENS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: X. Other Reviews (Cont) --

are not used as a plot device to get the author out of corners of her own making. It would not surprise me in the least to see Bradley's name on the Hugo ballot this year.

Reviewer, Darrell Schweitzer /repr. CONCERT 7/75, with permission/:

Explorers of Space, ed. Robert Silverberg (Thomas Nelson, Inc.; '75; \$6.95; 253 pp.).

This is another in Robert Silverberg's series of reprint anthologies, which serve the valuable function of keeping good stories available to new readers. Much of the material is very familiar, but the material is excellent if you haven't read it. Authors present include Clarke, Hamilton, Le Guin, Asimov, Silverberg, Simak, Leinster, Anderson. Worthwhile.

Prince of Annwn, by Evangeline Walton (Ballantine; '74; \$1.50; 170 pp.).

The most recent and chronologically the first of Evangeline Walton's brilliant novelizations of the Welsh Mabinogion. A must for any lover of fantasy or simply of good literature. Miss Walton is probably the greatest American writer of mythic fantasy, and at last her books seem to be catching on.

Reviewer, Martin Morse Wooster:

Strange Gifts: Eight Stories of Science Fiction, ed. Robert Silverberg (Thomas Nelson; '75; 191 pp.; \$6.50; SFBC, \$1.98; hb; dj by Frank Alois).

Robert Silverberg, formerly an industrious producer of hackwork, later an industrious producer of better stuff, has now turned his energies to being an industrious compiler of anthologies, second only to Roger Elwood in this field. This is the 9th anthology he has edited for Thomas Nelson--and five of these have also had Science Fiction Book Club editions. In short, Silverberg has been busy.

This anthology deals with humans having strange powers. We are promised in Silverberg's introduction that the "wild talents" included in this volume will not include the usual stuff--no telepathy, clairvoyance, or telekinesis. (We do have one with precognition, though.) This is a change, but will Silverberg find enough material? Let's see:

(1) Philip K. Dick, "The Golden Man" (IF '54). After the atomic war, police from the DCA ferret out various mutants with peculiar powers. One, Chris Johnson, is found--a bronzed golden god-like man, beautiful, yet strangely mute. The government tests for other powers--and the ones they do find, and how they are used, adds up to another fine tale from Phil Dick.

(2) Gordon R. Dickson, "Danger--Human!" (ASF '57). Aliens land in New Hampshire to test some humans and see what urges drive them to form future empires. Eldridge Timothy Parker is captured, and tested...as Gordie Dickson turns out another of his excellent yarns. (3) R.A. Lafferty, "All the People" (?, '61). A Lafferty story without his special style is no story at all, as this early effort about a man who claimed to know everyone in the world shows. (4) Alfred Bester, "Oddly and Id" (ASF '50). Odysseus Gaul is fortune-prone--eternally lucky, always advancing his career under improbable circumstances. But is this luck helpful or harmful?...you won't know until you read it, and you should read it.

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VIEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: X. Other Reviews (Cont) --

(5) Horace L. Gold, "The Man with English" (STAR SCIENCE FICTION '53). After an accident, Edgar Stone finds his senses are reversed, as pillows feel like rocks, beds like bed crumbs, blizzards like heat waves...mildly funny, outdated in these days of million-dollar malpractice suits. (6) Robert Silverberg, "To Be Continued" (ASF '56). Slight early Silverberg about Gaius Titus Menenius, a Roman centurion whose life cycles are slowed enough to enable him to live until 1956. (7) Frank Belknap Long, "Humpty Dumpty Had a Great Fall" (STARTLING '48). Philip Orban, orphan son of a father who discovered the first interstellar drive, invents a machine that throws the characters of this yarn into a parallel universe. This universe is based on Mother Goose--but the sickening and terrifying reality behind those supposedly fantastic poems. Some good descriptive points here, but Long's style is dredged out of WEIRD TALES, with "horror" and "terror" bumping heads in the same sentence more than once.

(8) Kris Neville, "Bettyann" (New Tales of Space and Time, '51). Bettyann Seldon, an alien child, is raised by human parents in the 1940's. She passes through the stages that normal women of that era passed through--until other aliens return for her.... This is a classic, although a strangely neglected one. I think it will remain a classic because of its two levels--as science fiction, the ending will ignite that sense of wonder, if anything will; but it stands even without its sfal aspects as an interesting and engrossing chronicle of life in the forties... and is that not what we want in our fiction--to vicariously experience and enjoy other lives?

Summing up, Silverberg has compiled another good anthology. One story here, by Neville, is a newly discovered classic; Bester, Dick and Dickson add very good yarns; the rest are "fair to middlin'". Buy it.

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Science Fiction: The Academic Awakening, ed. Willis E. McNelly (The College English Association, Centenary College of Louisiana, POBox 4188, Shreveport, LA 71104; a supplement to THE CEA CRITIC 27:1, 11/74; 59 pp.; \$2; pb; "chapbook" size, 6" x 9").

Here is a small book designed to show the concerned English teacher what science fiction is all about. McNelly has lined up the more interesting critics and writers; here we have Williamson (listed under the contents page as Jack W., in the contributors as John W.), Hillegas, Hipolito, Stover, Stuppel, Claeson, and McNelly himself for the teachers; Benford, Aldiss, Harrison, Ellison, Boyd, and Dick for the writers; with short comments on defining SF from many others. As is predictable with this kind of book, the academics only manage to write for other academics; the writers, though, are for everyone. Best in the book: Harrison, with the best definition of SF I've seen; Dick and Boyd, with fine articles on what it means to be an SF writer; and Benford, writing about "hard" SF. The rest can be taken or left, preferably left. Recommended for libraries and fans who enjoy this type of symposium.

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Reviewer, Dan Miller:

The Blue Star, by Fletcher Pratt (Ballantine #24537; pb; \$1.50; 242 pp.; cover by Darrell Sweet; 7/75 (2nd prtnng.; 1st prtnng. 5/69); orig. pub. '52 by Twayne).

Three men discuss what directions life might take on other worlds, and when they go to sleep that night, all three have the same dream....

Laletta Asterhax is an hereditary witch with a Blue Star--a stone which, when given in love and a witching, gives its wearer the power to read the thoughts of others via direct eye-contact. Latelle gives her Blue Star to Rodvard Bergelin, a

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IEWS, REVIEWS & ARCHIMEDEAN SPIRALS: X. Other Reviews (Cont) --

clerk who is also an agent of the revolutionary order known as the Sons of the New Day. Thus begins a series of adventures and intrigues in which the two "lovers" are split, and each undergoes a series of ordeals before they are finally reunited and leave their old ways to begin a new life together.

The world in which the dream-story is set is an unpleasant one. It is well constructed and internally consistent, but not one in which we would choose to live. Everyone we meet in the dream is scheming, treacherous, lustful and greedy. Treachery, sex, greed, perversion run rampant throughout the story. Even the two central characters are flawed and not particularly likeable. The plot goes from one intrigue to another, and the characters from one peril (and one potential bed-mate) to another.

There are morals here--and the Sons of the New Day and their revolution bear a striking parallel to the French Revolution--but the book was a disappointment. We had all we could do to stay with it until it was over. The language in which the tale is told (and in which the characters speak) is a perverted pseudo-English which greatly slows down one's reading, comprehension and enjoyment. And the unpleasantness of the characters makes it impossible for the reader to identify with them--and thus to have any interest in their fates and the outcome of the story. Perhaps a masochist might enjoy this--we didn't.

Rating -- 8.

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The Path of Unreason, by George O. Smith (Ballantine #24613; \$1.50; 212 pp.; pb; 10/75; orig. pub. '58 by Gnome Press; completely rewritten from 7/47 STARTLING STORIES novelette "Kingdom of the Blind"; cover by Gray Morrow).

Like many others before him who had been working to unravel the mystery of the source and substance of the Lawson Radiation, once-brilliant physicist Jim Carroll's memory has been wiped out, and he has withdrawn into a "pattern of total denial". Then, one day, he sees some top-secret papers being stolen, and no one believes him. He is now on the road to recovery....

He pursues the thefts of the papers--only no one else seems to see what he does. Apparently, some force is obscuring the minds of all the observers but himself. Then he is kidnapped by the aliens who are exerting this hypnotic force, and while their prisoner he memorizes the plans for a matter-transmitter. He escapes, builds the transmitter, and later uses it to save Earth from destruction by the aliens. All of this time, no one believes his story about the aliens, and everything he sees and does is given a perfectly rational and normal explanation by those around him.

Are there really aliens, or are they a product of his brilliant but partially warped mind and imagination? Is there really a hypnotic barrier that he alone can penetrate? Is he really the only man who can save the world from the much more powerful aliens, with everyone else in the world either disbelieving or against him? Or is he merely a brilliant paranoid with an overactive imagination?

An interesting, actionful and suspenseful wheels-within-wheels story, with some interesting concepts on the powers of the mind and non-rational thinking and logic/physics/etc. A bit of a letdown at the end, but still every bit as much fun as it was when we first read it in its earlier hardback incarnation many years ago.

Rating -- 3.

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