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Hal  
Clement:

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Science  
Fiction  
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by  
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Preoccupied as the science fiction field is today with the literary and technical aspects of the writing craft, it is both strange and unfortunate that the critics in the field have all but overlooked the very able Harry Clement Stubbs. It is strange because, though his output has been small -- two novels and eight shorter works in ten years -- it has been of a consistently high quality and has displayed a continuing development. In one sense, however, this neglect is understandable -- for Clement is that unique 1952 individual -- a distinctly science fiction writer.

This is not as paradoxical as it might at first sound, for it is a tragic fact that, as a result of the self-conscious, apologetic critical approach to science fiction that is the current mode, very little has been done to establish a basically science fictional critique. The neglect accorded Hal Clement as a stylist and science fiction writer is largely attributable to this.

Our aim here will be to evaluate Clement's writing on the basis of certain internal and self-imposed structural forms, to examine his methods, and to suggest some possible conclusions as to his overall theme -- that is to say, his philosophy and objectives. We will not attempt to transplant from the general field of writing to what has been and remains a special field, those standards not necessarily applicable to the special field.

The characteristic of Clement's writing most immediately apparent, indeed commencing with his first story, PROOF, is a modus operandi he has made most fertile use of in all but four of his stories (UNCOMMON SENSE, TROJAN FALL, COLD FRONT, FIREPROOF), and which he brought to the fullest development in his two novels. This characteristic is the use of double viewpoint, in Clement's hands so specialized and developed that it must be considered one of his basic methods. It should be noted that in all but one of the four exceptions noted (COLD FRONT) there is considerable use made of omniscient viewpoint, which in Clement's case is merely another way of attaining a second viewpoint -- the difference being that the all-seeing and occasionally commenting author is that second viewpoint, rather than a character from the story.

Double viewpoint in any case is difficult to handle, and badly done becomes disastrous to the author's control over his reader's attention. Clement manages it well, and, having particular objectives in mind, he succeeds in providing the reader with a sort of spectator-vantage point, an intellectual grandstand seat, enabling him to watch the opposing, or opposed, forces at work.

In PROOF, this duality of viewpoint is on a very elementary level. In keeping with the still-incompletely developed

style of the author, the story is utterly bereft of plot, and exhibits certain crudities of execution. There are simply two main characters, neither one very well drawn, hrcn the extra-terrestrial and Gordon Aller the earthman, each experiencing an environment totally outside the sensory limitations of the other. PROOF is an extremely simple philosophical exercise by Clement, a story of a type Arthur Jean Cox would call anecdotal, the object of which is to make a point or demonstrate an idea, here that of different universes physically congruent whose differentiation hinges upon unlike sets of senses.

Clement's next story, TECHNICAL ERROR, in many respects one of his best efforts, is a further and very special development of this double viewpoint. Most remarkable is the fact that, while the second viewpoint is a vital part of the story, at no time is that viewpoint directly presented -- that is to say, the reader is never actually written into the second viewpoint. But for this it would be possible to evaluate TECHNICAL ERROR as simply another -- if somewhat above average -- man-versus-technical-problem yarn. For it is the representation of that other culture, by inference and evidence only, that gives to the story such impact and such unearthly reality. Two cultural -- more accurately, two technological -- patterns, millenia apart in time, inextricably involved with one another, experiencing absolutely no intentional opposition to one another, yet locked in this intense intellectual battle. Although the reader may actually see the story only through one written viewpoint, it is the ever-present though unwritten other viewpoint that provides the sense of conflict.

TROJAN FALL, Clement's next, makes use of author omniscience, as commented upon earlier. Clement explored this mechanism for the simple reason that he had as protagonist a somewhat unsavory character and an ignorant one. These are characteristics difficult to display in a short story by any other method than author omniscience. Also, and as important, the use of this secondary viewpoint was necessary so that the reader could be provided with the correct information which was inaccessible to the unlearned primary character. We shall see that this is a prime factor in Clement's stories -- that the reader must have the correct information.

A year and more passed before Clement appeared again, this time with UNCOMMON SENSE, in which story he for the first time attains his full stride. It is a most remarkable short story based on an exceedingly ingenious idea. Here we begin to see the Clement of later years, his stories packed with infinite and fascinating detail. Here Clement the author, in his role as omniscient second viewpoint, draws back at one point and exclaims:

"Don't ask why he took so long. You may think that the terrific adaptability evidenced by those strange eyes would be clue enough; or perhaps you may be in a mood to excuse him. Columbus probably excused those of his friends who failed to solve the egg problem."

Which is by way of being as good a commentary on Clement's stories as could be imagined. Essentially they are scientific mystery stories, scientific problems which, in most cases, the scientifically or technically trained reader should be able to solve. In UNCOMMON SENSE, for example, all

the evidence necessary to a solution of the mystery of the uncommon sense is present; Clement's little comment quoted above is like the pause in a detective story wherein the reader is supposed to figure out who done it.

This is equally well demonstrated in Clement's subsequent, though otherwise much inferior, yarn, *COLD FRONT*. This is the single exception to date to his use of some form of double viewpoint, and one wonders why this, of all his stories, is so constructed. *COLD FRONT* is overlong and drags, and has little significance except in that it demonstrates a number of Clement's characteristics, notably that of the scientific mystery premise and certain others to be suggested shortly.

In his next story, *ASSUMPTION UNJUSTIFIED*, Clement returned to his original double viewpoint form, based upon two main characters, each entirely sympathetically presented, and each representing entirely different life-forms -- the familiar pattern of terrestrial and non-terrestrial. In this story, too, Clement for the first time makes use of a tactic which he has since employed with extreme effectiveness, notably in his two novels. This tactic is the use of a human child as the terrestrial viewpoint character. This we must consider as one of Clement's most significant discoveries.

There is a theme, not a specific theme but a general theme, which runs through all of Clement's stories, and which is excellently demonstrated in *ASSUMPTION UNJUSTIFIED*. This theme can best be described in one word: misjudgement. Every short story so far written by Clement has hinged entirely upon misjudgement, by either or both viewpoint characters. This is true of his novels as well, but their greater length and more involved story lines force this theme into the background as a more supplementary factor.

For example, in *PROOF* the misjudgement was very, very basic, and very general -- the attempt to evaluate an environment not properly recorded by the senses. *TECHNICAL ERROR* was an exposition of a somewhat similar idea, the difference being, instead of environmental, technological. Clement himself tells us that misjudgement is the theme when he asks, "Whose was the error?" *TROJAN FALL* was a simple case of misjudgement through a baser, if morally more excusable kind of ignorance -- lack of information. *COLD FRONT* placed human culture in the embarrassing position of completely misjudging -- in this case underestimating -- another culture. Indeed, one of the human characters in *COLD FRONT* remarks to the person primarily responsible for the error -- "I want to see you eat humble pie." Which seems almost to be Clement's back-of-the-hand to intellectual snobbery in general. *UNCOMMON SENSE* is the problem of the mystery story applied to science fiction, the misjudgement being one of lack of attention to the scientific clues available. *ASSUMPTION UNJUSTIFIED* is the fullest development, both from the detail and characterization standpoints, of this theme -- here the extra-terrestrial is led to the conclusion that immature humans are actually full-developed representatives of the species, and tragedy nearly results.

In his two other short stories, Clement has brought the two elements of double viewpoint and misjudgement as a theme to particular and somewhat farcical fulfillment.

In *ANSWER*, the second viewpoint, as in *TECHNICAL ERROR*,

is never actually written into the story, but is implicit. As in his previous works, the two viewpoint characters are a human and a non-human. In this case, however, the non-human is a thinking machine, certainly a macabre application of Clement's preoccupation with the alien creature personality. Here the misjudgement factor is perhaps the most complete and certainly the most disastrous intellectually in this long line of Clement stories based on such incorrect evaluations: the assumption that a brain can comprehend itself, including this comprehension. This is also a case wherein the double viewpoint element merges into an unique form of what it always, essentially, is: different aspects of the same problem. For the alien brain, that is to say the thinking machine in this case, in the end becomes ipso facto the brain of the human protagonist -- victimized by misjudgement.

FIREPROOF, on the other hand, is one of the cleverest pieces of thinking in the whole field of science fiction writing. Perhaps the best, certainly one of the best, of that particular brand of trick scientific yarn to which Campbell has been science fiction's midwife, it is also a wonderful example of how in science fiction the most elementary scientific facts can be illumined into fascinating reading. And, again, the theme of misjudgement is present, as well as the pattern of double viewpoint based on two opposed characters (though here both are human characters). The misjudgement in FIREPROOF, however, deserves special comment, for it is really an immense practical joke on the reader. Ostensibly it is the "villain" viewpoint character that makes the mistake, but there would be absolutely no story unless the reader were equally guilty of the same identical error in judgement. Fittingly, this has been the last major use by Clement of this theme.

It is in the medium of the novel that Clement has been able to bring his highly individual and thoroughly science fictional style to its maximum development. Examination of these two singularly impressive works reveals the extreme importance of Clement as a science fiction stylist. More than anything else in the field in recent years, these two novels are spintillating examples of the scientific mind at work in a dramatic medium.

Considerable discussion has been devoted to Clement's use of the double viewpoint. NEEDLE is the culmination of this mechanism. In this story the two viewpoints, previously always totally distinct personalities with different physical as well as mental viewpoints, supplied sometimes with different data and sometimes with different sensory mechanisms for interpretation of the same data, become one in all but personality. The two protagonists in NEEDLE assume a most fascinating relationship: the physical viewpoints and the sensory evaluation of the data are identical; the single distinction -- and the story -- lies in the particular interpretation given, and the significance attached, to the data by the two personalities involved. The Hunter sees through the eyes of Bob Kinnaird, hears with his ears, senses the physical environment through his nerves -- but his response as a character is different.

NEEDLE is significant in a number of respects. It is, for example, at least one approach to the problem of the de-

detective story in science fiction, perhaps a natural outgrowth of the fact that Clement is essentially a scientific mystery story writer. Additionally, it is certainly the ultimate variation on the human host - alien parasite theme, being a far superior story to the later Heinlein novel, The Puppet Masters. Most important of all, it explores to the fullest possible extent an alien set of creature-environment conditions, and in this Clement achieved what is certainly one of the most complete characterizations of a non-human that has appeared in science fiction. It is in the engrossing story of the Hunter discovering his new environment, investigating it, and solving the problems it presents to him as an entity that the reader gains a profound insight into the personality of this remarkable creature. Until the Hunter actually discovers a satisfactory host, the problem is highly generalized; once he has attached himself to Bob Kinnaird a new story, literally, begins. The reader is presented with a startling look at a hitherto unexplored part of the universe -- the world inside our skins. Significantly, reader-character identification and sympathy are so complete at this point that there is no consideration at all other than that the Hunter must succeed in mastering this body.

Now, however, the second viewpoint character, the host, has his own special set of problems, referent to the same data faced by the Hunter. Bob Kinnaird's problem is the reverse of the Hunter's; he too must adjust to the demands of co-existence with another life form, but his is a slightly different adjustment, neither passive nor dominant, but a striking mixture of both. In the hands of a lesser craftsman than Clement, this preliminary and very essential crisis might have been botched horribly. Note that Clement has again used a child as his human agent. In the present instance this bypasses the obvious difficulties which the personality of an adult would have placed in the path of the Hunter.

The third plot -- one might call it an internal thematic variation, such is the story construction -- is the actual thread of the novel as a whole: to catch the villain. Actually, it is not a particularly difficult problem, at least from the reader's point of view; all the data are present, and the solution is quite clear. Structurally, this is a justification for the great time spent by Clement on the Hunter's adjustment to his new environment, for the hunted also is a parasite and must have made similar adjustments, which would be reflected in ways familiar to the reader.

ICEWORLD, while inferior to NEEDLE, is nonetheless in the full Clement tradition as to method and effectiveness. To some extent the situation is the reverse of that in NEEDLE -- instead of being coexistent, the two viewpoint characters, again a human child and an alien, again with the same general data, find it impossible to approach each other physically except under the most trying restrictions -- and it is this which makes the story.

Much of the same pattern is followed in ICEWORLD that was used in its predecessor. Again the story is basically a detective story, and again there is the advance scientific spadework -- the investigation and discovery of data, the delineation of differing environments, the results of contact between two alien races. Contrary to a criticism that has been made, ICEWORLD is not overlong -- it is the detail and

exploration of ideas made possible by its length that renders the novel so satisfying.

A most important consideration in regard to ICEWORLD is that the problem is a problem confronting both alien and earth characters, which must be solved by the cooperation of both. This is clearly in keeping with Clement's philosophy as a writer. The most casual glance at his work reveals that the opposed forces in his stories are never those of good-bad, hero-villain, right-wrong. Quite correctly, he has on occasion used a "villain" as a main or viewpoint character (TROJAN FALL, FIREPROOF), but only as an agency for the purpose of presenting one phase of a scientific problem in the dramatic form demanded by the fiction medium. ICEWORLD, as suggested, is really the story of an alien and a human creature struggling with a scientific problem. The injection of a "villain" into the story provides an excuse for the adventure, and lends a more universal and appealing emotional value to what would otherwise be a mere adventure in ideas. Obviously, this applies even more particularly to NEEDLE; the true fascination of the story, that which makes it such an unforgettable reading experience, is the solution of the host-parasite problem by the Hunter and Bob Kinnaird.

Looking back over Clement's work, we can trace a steady development in this line. His introductory work, PROOF, was entirely an idea yarn in which there was no element of personal conflict, and hence no characterization. Similarly with TECHNICAL ERROR, although here Clement's work begins to acquire a human quality. In UNCOMMON SENSE he cares so little about the significance of the "villain" as such that he casually identifies him in so many words -- "In a way, of course, the villain was right" -- and then, having made his excuse for having a character in a particular tight fix, returns to the fix itself and its scientific solution. In TROJAN FALL he experimented briefly with the idea of a villain as a viewpoint character, but only to make the scientific error more grim, more emotionally satisfying to the reader, since the story is really nothing more nor less than a brief scientific lecture. Significantly, in COLD FRONT, Clement's closest approach to outright villainy results in extreme difficulty for the Master Salesman. ASSUMPTION UNJUSTIFIED is his first employment of high emotional conflict, but quite typically and effectively he bases it upon the scientific problem at hand. Recall also that this is the story in which he stumbled across his wonderful discovery of the immature human being as foil for the mature alien. After this, the element of personality conflict was always present, but also always growing only out of the scientific mystery about which the story was written, becoming a sort of enabling element without which the intellectual drama of NEEDLE and ICEWORLD would have failed completely.

Thus we see that Clement, the scientist, transfers his scientific attitude and methodology to the pages of his science fiction. The importance lies in the problem; what really matters is the mastery of the environment. In the twentieth century it is not true that great stories can be written about only man's conflict with himself and never about his conflict with his environment, for our scientific knowledge has expanded the "himself" until in all its ultimate relationships it embraces the entire universe.

This is the intellectual stage on which Clement's dramas are played. Few men working in the field today are capable of utilizing this attitude successfully. It is no surprise that Clement is not a prolific writer; when one considers the wealth of detail and scientific fact packed into each page of his writing, one begins to realize that Clement's writing is perhaps the most technically perfect in execution, the most scientifically convincing, and the most carefully worked out science fiction today. He has mastered the problem of presenting scientific facts to the reader by making them the story.

There have been and there will be other styles peculiarly adapted to the science fiction field. Hal Clement's is a model style of this kind, one which should prove increasingly fertile in future years, and one after which others might cast a jealous eye.

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## Quotable Correspondence

Did you notice "In Times to Come" in the August ASF? Campbell's guess that "the average new science-fiction author" (and I assume he means specifically Astounding s-f author) is "a man between twenty and thirty-five, a professional technologist or student technologist of one kind or another, and he writes science-fiction to express his ideas, not for a living. He never becomes a professional science-fiction author..." ...is reminiscent of something Cox wrote a year ago: (In "Astounding's Science Fiction: Some Changes in Form", FA, Sept. '52. Ed.) "During the years 1947 and '48, 35 new writers appeared in the magazine, and during the past twenty issues we have seen the same number. Most of these writers appear once and are never seen again. I would say that it's certain that the majority are men with professional and technical careers who each wrote his brief story as a vehicle for an idea he found amusing." They both could be wrong, of course (though I don't suggest that they are), but this does help bear out my opinion that your boy Cox knows Astounding as well as its editor does.

Douglas Andersen

(Let's assume that they are right. Do you think a case might be made from that definition of the "average new s-f author" to account for the lack of sympathy toward science fiction that is generally found among "literary" people? Naturally, new writers whose background is technical are not often going to produce anything of high literary quality -- inclination and available time would have precluded their mastering that field. And conversely, the literary man has specialized in his field to an equal exclusion of technical matters -- which might render improbable his appreciation for (and understanding of?) the ideas the technologists think interesting enough to try to make a story of. Is a high calibre of science-fiction, with emphasis on both the terms, probable? Ed.)

Kelsey's reference to SFA following his comment on the parasitic nature of the advertising business (review of Player Piano, Sept. '52, p. 16. Ed.) requires a rebuttal, and I've found one, oddly enough, in the opening of your Galley article on advertising in the "little magazines": "We who have to

bring in business must get out before the beloved customer and shout, search, halloo, promise, concede, coax, be funny, coo, thump, seek, knock, punch, and GET the order....'

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Pardon the long quote from yourself, but it seems to me that there you've said it! There is advertising and there's advertising. I don't think Kelsey intended to slur SFA or the ads in it. But in case he hadn't noticed, I wanted to point out that it's the omnipresent uninformative, obnoxious asininities (which, of course, we intimidated consumers pay for) that are the products of the parasites. SFA's ads are honest. They describe what's for sale, where it may be had and for how much. Nothing morally reprehensible there, surely!  
Elroy Brown

(You know, I'd forgotten that article...which isn't too surprising when taken into consideration with the fact that it was ghost-written for me by a friend (girl type). About all I did with it was to eliminate the more obvious feminisms. Of course you realize that your comments are subversive, but somehow I can't disagree with you. Ed.)

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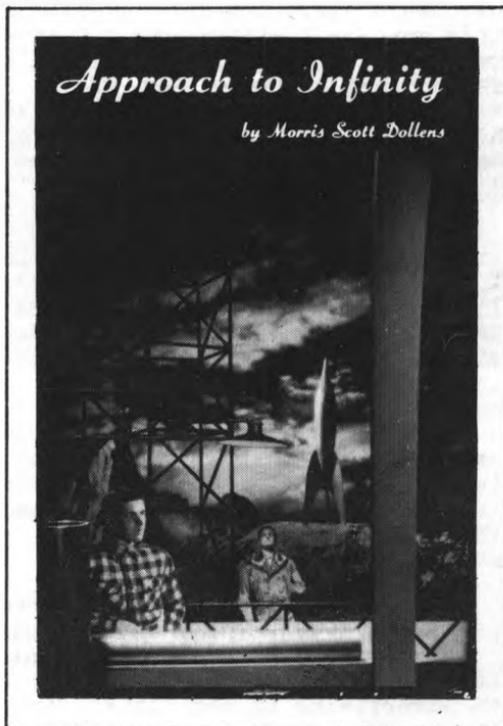
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Active since 1946 in the science fiction fan movement, Don Day took part in both local and national organizational work, for three years edited the FANSCIENT, repeatedly voted "best fanzine", and in 1950 acted as chairman of the MORVHSCON, the 8th World Science Fiction Convention.

At right, Mr. Day is shown with the approximately 20,000 file-cards which contain the information which has gone to make up this volume.



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### CONTEST RESULTS

Stephen F. Schultheis of Warren, Ohio, obtained twenty-seven new subscribers to the Advertiser, thereby winning the first prize in our recent contest, a copy of "the most beautiful and valuable fantasy book ever published", William M. Timlin's "The Ship That Sailed to Mars".

Paul Gordon of Los Angeles, second prize winner with 16 new subscribers, was returned the full \$16 that he'd passed on to us.

Forrest J Ackerman, also of Los Angeles, was a close third prize winner with fifteen new subscribers. His was a 50% refund, in this case \$7.50.

David Cohen of Australia and Morris Scott Dollens of Los Angeles were the other two 50% refund winners. Both of these fellows are still turning up new subscribers but of course their prizes were determined by their standings at the closing date of the contest, September 10th.

Recap: the contest boosted SFA's circulation by 90. The editor's library made a dear sacrifice in this contest - but one that the editor doesn't regret...too much. By the special nature of its contents, circulation is of prime importance to the Advertiser, and its editor is most grateful to all who entered his contest and to these 90, as well as to all other, new subscribers.

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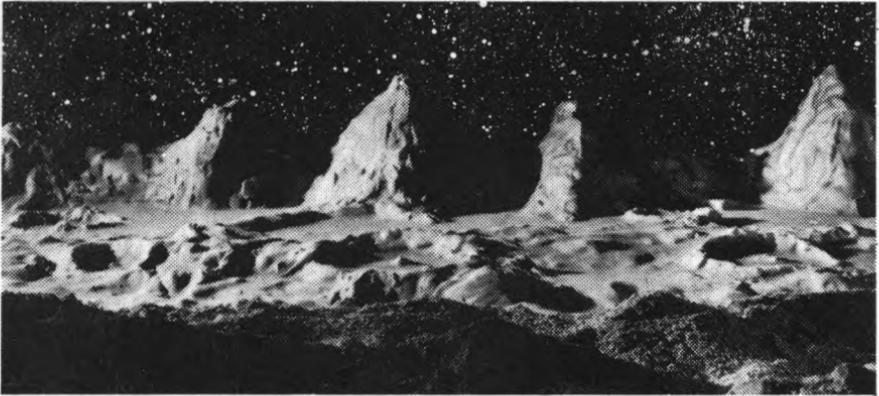
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# Books

## Science-Fiction and S-F Non-Fiction



As concerns the reviewing of new books, this issue is being published pretty much out of phase with the first big batch of fall releases. Within a week of closing date I had received nothing for review. But as I write this, shortly before sending copy to Swift & Co., their respective publishers have delivered no less than twenty-two new books to me. And last issue I complained of being sent so few!

This allows a somewhat less than desirable length of time in which to accomplish a diversified distribution of the books and the reading, writing, and copy preparation that must be completed before deadline. So the reviews for this issue haven't been written yet.

Books received whose review in these pages must await January's issue include, firstly and to my mind most important, Don Day's monumental INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES: 1926-1950 (Ferri Press, Box 5007, Portland 13, Oregon, \$6.50). This volume, 184 8½ x 11 pages sturdily bound in buckram, is the end product of an enormous task superbly done. Each story published in 58 different magazines during the first quarter century of science fiction magazines is listed twice, by title and by author. Each listing tells the magazine title and date of issue, tells that the story is a short, novelette, serial, or whatever, and on which page of the issue it begins. Following the author's name is given each pseudonym he has used (and in this as in all else the compiler spared no effort to achieve strict accuracy -- another phase of his job in which he is the pioneer). This book has already done me the service of showing that some of my favorite authors have appeared in magazines I've never bothered to examine. And I suspect that you, as I, will find yourself digging through your older magazines to reread forgotten yarns that the INDEX has reminded you of. Don Day has earned the congratulations and gratitude of us all.

Another title of bibliographical interest is Darrell C. Richardson's MAX BRAND: THE MAN AND HIS WORK (Fantasy Publishing Co., Inc., Los Angeles, 198 pp., \$3.00). Following a long, meaty essay by the editor titled "The Life and Works of Max Brand" are chapters by eight other writers and indices of Frederick Faust's books and magazine stories, arranged by

sources as well as by Faust's numerous pennames. The story of a phenomenal writer told by those who best knew him and his work. Illustrated with photographs.

Also from FPCI recently are three others. Cornel Lengyel's much-honored drama, THE ATOM CLOCK, \$1.00. DROME, by John Martin Leahy, a land-inside-the-earth story from early issues of Weird Tales; several full page and double-page illustrations by the author; \$3.00. And a new edition of John Taine's long out of print novel, GREEN FIRE, also \$3.00.

Wilson Tucker's second s-f novel, THE LONG LOUD SILENCE (Rinehart, \$2.50), surpasses his 1951 yarn, CITY IN THE SEA (Rinehart, and Galaxy S-F Novel). Atomic bomb and bacteriological war hit the eastern part of the U.S. In self-defense the western part establishes a quarantine of the eastern, and the situation in the east becomes grim, brutal, desperate.

Gnome Press offers three collections from the Astounding of the 1940's. ROBOTS HAVE NO TAILS by Lewis Padgett, CITY by Clifford Simak, and FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE by Isaac Asimov. As best I can deduce, in the face of such handicaps as one probable omission in the previous copyright data in CITY, a retitling of components of FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE, and the limiting of Don Day's INDEX to 1950 (INDEX, by the way, provides among its invaluable information a complete listing of all stories in each recognized series), the Padgett and Simak books include the entirety of their respective series (Galagher, the frequently inebriated inventor who "plays science by ear", and the broad-staged Webster family pageant) and the Asimov book, together with its predecessor, FOUNDATION, completes its series within hard covers. Each is \$2.75.

Shasta's CLOAK OF AESIR by John W. Campbell, Jr. (\$3.00), contains seven of the 1935-1939 Don A. Stuart stories: The Escape, Forgetfulness, and The Machine and The Aesir Series.

The 1952 version of Messrs. Bleiler and Dikty's BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES (Frederick Fell, NY, 288 pp., \$2.95) continues in their tradition of literate s-f of the more fanciful varieties. Eight magazines are represented (eleven if one includes the original sources of some of Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction's selections) with the significant omission of Astounding Science Fiction.

Twayne Publishers (NY) have published (with scheduled releases, resp., of October 13th and 15th) THE REFUGEE CENTAUR by Antoinorobles, "a fairy tale for adults", translated by Edward and Elizabeth Huberman (245 pp., \$3.00) and WITCHES THREE, a collection (423 pp., \$3.95), and announce for early publication L. Sprague de Camp's THE CONTINENT MAKERS AND OTHER TALES OF THE VIAGENS, and THE PETRIFIED PLANET, another collection of three (these previously unpublished).

WITCHES THREE contains three stories of short novel to novel length, an introduction ("A Plea For witches" by John Ciardi) which is written with so remarkable a combination of erudition and wit as to be worthy of publication in the Advertiser, and a dust jacket blurb that is perhaps an all-time high in the practice of that art. The three stories are: Fritz Leiber's classic from Unknown (what the heck, let's put Don Day to work -- it's from the April 1943 Unknown), "Conjure Wife" -- a suspenseful tale of witchcraft on a modern American college campus; "There Shall Be No Darkness", an exceptional yarn about werewolvbery by James Blish -- from the April 1950 Thrilling Wonder Stories; and the longest of

the lot, "The Blue Star" by Fletcher Pratt, previously unpublished story of a strange but well and thoroughly constructed culture and what Mr. Ciardi terms the witch-of-dilemma, the unwilling witch. The entire volume is eloquent testimonial for what may be done by ingenious writers with what critics are wont to term "a fresh approach" to subject matter we'd thought about exhausted.

Those interested in Cybernetics should write to the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation at P. O. Box 575, Packanack Lane, N. J., requesting information on their publications on the subject (and if you do, will you mention SFA, please?) The Foundation sponsors annual conferences on cybernetics and a number of other subjects, mostly of a medical nature.

Quoting Dr. Frank Fremont-Smith, Medical Director at the Foundation, "We are interested, first of all, in furthering knowledge about cybernetics, and to this end the participants were brought together to exchange ideas, experiences, data, and methods. In addition to this particular goal, however, there is a further, and perhaps more fundamental, aim which is shared by all our conference groups: the promotion of meaningful communication between scientific disciplines."

An estimate of the thoroughness of their approach to these tasks may be gained by noting the list of participants in the cybernetics conferences, which includes Norbert Wiener, Claude Shannon, I. A. Richards, John Von Neumann, F. S. C. Northrop, Margaret Mead, and many others representing the social, biological, and physical sciences. Transactions of the sixth, seventh, and eighth conferences (1949, '50, and '51) have been published and are available at \$3.50, \$3.50, and \$4.00, resp. The first volume is paper-bound, the other two are cloth; 209, 251, and 240 pages.

Arthur Louis Joquel II's THE CHALLENGE OF SPACE is published by House-Warven but distributed by Challenger Research Institute (5912 Tujunga Avenue, North Hollywood, Calif; 224 pp., illustrated with numerous photographs, \$4.00). A series of unusual essays on a variety of subjects; see ads in SFA January or March this year for chapter titles. The approach is mystical.

New American Library offers revised versions of two worthy titles, George Gamow's THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF THE SUN (213 pp. and index; illustrated with numerous drawings and fourteen pages of photographs; 1940, 1952; 35¢) and GOOD READING, A Guide to the world's Best Books prepared by the Committee on College Reading. To catalog the contents of this volume would mean reprinting it. I find among its recommendations so many titles I've enjoyed that I'm convinced it's a noteworthy aid to selection in fields of my interest. Thumb through it at your newsstand; you'll soon see if it has anything to offer you. The mention of books published this year and the inclusion of a section on science fiction (by J.O. Bailey, author of Pilgrims Through Space and Time) indicate the modernity of the revision.

Five more juveniles come from Winston: MIST OF DAWN by Chad Oliver, VAULT OF THE AGES by Poul Anderson, ISLANDS IN THE SKY by Arthur C. Clarke, ROCKET JOCKEY by Philip St. John, and SONS OF THE OCEAN DEEPS by Bryce Walton. Each is \$2.00.

The 1952 Astounding Science Fiction serial GUNNER CADE by Cyril Judd is offered from Simon and Schuster at \$2.75.

the editor

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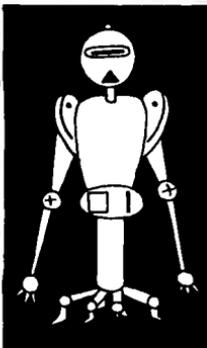
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SUMMER, 1952

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