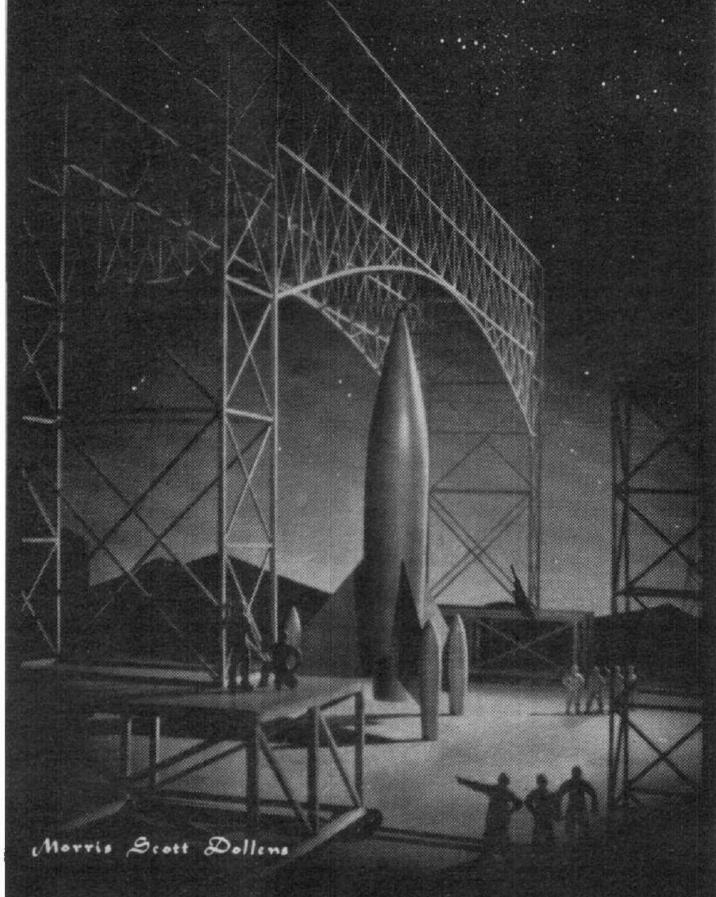
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This issue, the 5th of Volume VI, contains nothing but ads and book reviews. The titles discussed are Judgment Night, The Petrified Planet, Modern Science Fiction, West of the Sun, The Best From Fantasy and Science Fiction, Second Series, Flying Saucers, Ballroom of the Skies, Future Tense, Rockets Beyond the Earth, The Continent Makers, The Titan, and Space Service.

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A Rhapsody in Romanticism

JUDGMENT NIGHT by C. L. Hoore. Gnome Press; 344 p., \$3.50.

Reviewed by Frederic Shroyer

The name C. L. Moore at the head of a story immediately evokes an anticipation of sensitive, sensuous, and romantic prose to come. It is a trademark that always accompanies a good product. I would go so far as to say that there is no fantasy or science fiction author today who writes a more artistic or competent story than Miss Moore.

Judgment Night is a short novel in a similarly titled volume which includes an additional four stories by the same author.* These short stories are excellent but have no relationship to the title novel. It is always rather sad when a publisher jams unrelated material together until he has achieved a wanted thickness. Judgment Night, the novel—and hereafter any reference to the title will refer to the novel and not to the collection—is a superb story and one which would have merited publication alone.

Judgment Night is essentially a romantic tale. Miss Moore is a romanticist of the purest ray and I for one say "Hurrah!" The world is much in need of romance. Lord Dunsany, another romanticist, has often written of this need and he suggests that romance must be imported when it is not home grown:

Something must be wrong with an age whose drama deserts romance. Romance is so inseparable from life that all we need to obtain romantic drama is for the dramatist to find any age and any country where life is not too thickly veiled and cloaked with puzzles and conventions, in fact to find a people that is not in the agonies of self-consciousness. For myself, I think that it is simpler to imagine such a people, as it saves the trouble of reading to find a romantic age, or the trouble of making a journey to lands where there is no press.

Best of all, though, I think that Dunsany has hit the problem a cracking blow when he suggests that our romance may satisfactorily derive from the imagination rather than from history.

A consideration of the most famous of Romantic Ages, that of Keats, Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, will result in the perception of certain romantic patterns. There is usually a discontent with the contemporary age and a subsequent exploration of other ages to find one which is more satisfactory. Past ages are always better, and again and again, the romantic fastens upon the Nedieval age with its supposed enchantments and knights, its moonlit castles and maidens; its brave horsemen and their savage combats. (And in Miss Moore's world of the future, we find many of these delights.) This particular pattern is so often encountered that it may be well described as the Romantic's Route.

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Again, the romantic may explore the future for a better, more glamorous age. Byron was interested in the future, wrote a poem about the last days of the Earth, and speculated on the future again in that finest of fantasy dramas, Cain. Campbell wrote a poem of the last days of the Earth, as did Hood. Even Mrs. Shelley, the authoress of Frankenstein, went into the future in her undeservedly neglected Last Man.

At first glance there may seem to be a contradictory element in this romantic love of the past coupled with an interest in the future. The apparent contradiction ceases to exist though when one realizes that in both instances the romantic is concerned with worlds that do not presently exist; with worlds in which anything can happen, and in which he may fashion his dreams into patterns that will be invulnerable to the ravages of the real.

Miss Moore's star - shot stories are usually of this genre. They are deservedly loved and treasured by many people who find within them the beauty and the wonder and the romance that Dunsany has so wisely recognized as essential ingredients for the psychic health of man.

Miss hoore realizes to a greater extent, perhaps, than others who write in the genre, that the fanciful and the imaginative can never be meaningful to the reader if they are divorced from his experience. She never fails to construct upon this realization. In Judgment Night we are transported into the universe of a million years ahead. And yet, in rainswept forests that nestle at the foot of green hills (and how Miss Moore loves the magic of the rain and the strength of green hills!) a tree frog croaks as the heroine passes. It is reassuring to find that in this universe of the future when star fights against star and prize of the struggle is the entire Milky Way, a dark figure drops from the curtained window of a castle and steals into the rain-laced night; that the ruler of the Universe converses before a roaring fire in a great fireplace; that the warriors who trace white silver across the slate of a million light years wear mail and carry fire-swords; and that the ultimate battle, the Universal battle — in a very real sense — is fought by men on horseback.

The following excerpt is demonstrative of the timelessness of Miss Moore's magnificent romanticism:

Through the green folds of the hills veiled by slanting rain, the emperor watched the remnants of his army wind slowly upward. He sat his fretting horse easily, looking down upon this hilltop with much the same look upon his face that his portrait had worn in the Hall of the Hundred Emperors. Eager and fierce and proud. Around his neck over the armour he wore a chain...

This excerpt could describe any great emperor, from Caesar to Napoleon. It is all part of our historical experience already, it is the stuff of romance to us whether it be out of an unborn world of the future or a world that lives only in the archives of the dead. Miss Hoore knows a great truth -- and she practices it, too. She realizes that man does

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not change: that all of the things that make him pleasant and nasty, admirable and despicable today made him so in the past and will continue to do so in the future. I think she realizes, too, that each age has its accumulated symbols for virtues, vices, and states of being. We still experience a series of impressions when the concept of a knight is presented to us: he is a symbol of high courage, and evil or not, heroic magnificence. (It is interesting to note in this connection that Miss Moore's never-to-be-forgotten Northwest Smith was cast in another symbol: that of the lean, laconic, utterly courageous cowboy. Readers may remember too that H. G. Wells portrayed his Gods, in The Man Who Could Work Miracles, as great men riding gigantic horses across the constellations.) In Judgment Night, as in most of her excellent stories, Kiss Moore achieves a Romantic synthesis of the futuristic and the medieval. This fusion is singularly satis-The medieval ingredients and symbols (invariably there is sword play) serve as a romantic bridge along which we joyously follow Miss Moore into the future.

Another aspect of the romanticism which permeates <u>Judgment Night</u> is the poetic cast of the language of the story. <u>Miss Moore</u> has a poetic genius which will one day, I confidently predict, produce a fine volume of poetry. Consider some of the following excerpts from the novel:

...the pulse of empire beat out through the interstellar space, tides waxing and ebbing and breaking in distant thunder upon the shores of the planets...

Describing a bedroom of the pleasure-satellite Cyrille, Miss Moore writes,

For one thing, it appeared to have no floor. A film of very faintly dim-blue sparkles overlying a black void seemed to be all that upheld the tread. A bed like a cloud confined in ebony palings floated apparently clear of the nonexistent floor. Overhead in a night sky other clouds moved slowly and soporifically over the faces of dim stars. A few exquisitely soft and firm chairs and a chaise longue or two had a curious tendency to drift slowly about the room unless captured and sat upon.

There are further romantic patterns in Judgment Night. One decided pattern, exemplified by the above quotation, is that concerned with soaring and of release from the earth. It is that wonderful pattern of bouyancy and freedom out of which all good dreams are made. When Juille, the amazonian heroine arrives on the pleasure satellite she is soon dining on an air-borne platform which drifts and glides about a tremendous tree in the utterly spacious dining salon. Again, when Juille stands before the Ancients there seems to be no floor beneath her feet; rather she seems to be suspended in space. I know of no one today who can better recreate by the printed word the ecstacy of the dream state in which one soars above the earth and drifts through summer nights, than Miss Moore. Only once, in Blackwood's Jimbo, have I found this rare and wondrous magic before.

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The temptation to explore a work of this calibre further is almost irresistable. There is a great depth and fine surging currents of emotion and beauty and philosophy throughout the novel. In the cat-like creature, the llar, Miss Moore has created a symbolic counterpart of that little creature, the tarsier, which once, too, stood for a moment in the corridor of life and then started on the journey that led to man; and in the last words of the Envoy there is much that applies to us today.

Miss Moore, unlike most of the present writers of fantasy, knows what literature is and often creates it. And not only does she say things well, but also she has things to say. Miss Moore is as deep as a well and long after the superficial fireworks of some of the current hacks have fizzled out in the rain of a ready oblivion, much of what she wrote will be remembered, reprinted, and perennially respected.

THE PETRIFIED PLANET, which contains "The long View" by Fletcher tratt, "Uller Uprising" by H. Beam Piper, "Daughters of Earth" by Judith Merril, and an introduction by John D. Clark. Twayne, 1952; 263 p., \$2.95.

This book represents, to quote from the jacket blurb, "a new departure in science fiction... The first of a new series featuring the joint efforts of distinguished scientists and top-flight authors. The scientist is asked to set up in detail the conditions that would exist on an imagined but possible world. Three ... writers are then asked to work out independent novelettes that solve the problems of that environment in human terms."

As the possible forerunner of a trend to put science back in science fiction this is an experiment which I welcome with enthusiasm and some slight reservations. Dr. Clark has done a neat, tight, and convincing job of setting up the conditions on two imaginary worlds. One is Uller, an earth-like planet revolving about a Sol-type sun, but with its axis lying in the plane of the orbit, which results in a mad climatology, and such an abundance of soluble silicates that the animals have developed silicone body tissues and quartz teeth. Niflheim, the other world, has a hot blue-white sun and an atmosphere of free flourine and volatile fluorides. The plants have fluorocarbon tissues and the animals teflon bones.

The three writers have been meticulous about keeping their stories consistent with the conditions set by Clark, but they have rather worked out human problems in terms of the given environment reduced to the lowest common denominator than the reverse, as promised by the blurb. Fratt tells a story of interstellar political skullduggery, Piper offers a thud-and-blundery yet still challenging study of the question of the Earthman's burden, Merril makes a deep and sympathetic examination of what it is like to be a woman and a pioneer. All three stories are good of their kind, but any one of them could have happened anywhere. They conform to conditions on Clark's hypothetical worlds, rather than arise

MODERN SCIENCE FICTION

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REGINALD BRETNOR

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from them. If the book had been devoted to one novel, with the postulated environment genetically related to the story, I should have been better pleased. But perhaps good beer needs no egg. All three authors have taken a beautifully thought-out bit of scientific extrapolation and done no violence to it. For which relief much thanks.

Clyde Beck

MODERN SCIENCE FICTION Its Meaning and Its Future, edited by Reginald Bretnor. Coward-McCann, 1953; 294 p., \$3.75.

If this book were to be read by only a small percentage of the people who are curious about science fiction and those whose business it is to understand it (by which is meant, of course, the critics), it would more than undo the damage done by the unfair, uncomprehending treatment we've suffered at the hands of Life and Time magazines, and so on. One could hardly ask more of any one volume as a literary ambassador from we who are serious about science fiction to those others who are capable of comprehending its goals. But, I'm afraid, the circulation we'd very much like to see the book achieve will not occur. For although I read virtually every major book review medium in this country, at this writing -- six weeks after publication -- I have not yet seen any mention of the book outside of the "books received" columns. (If I have missed any, I'd appreciate being told.)

Discussion of the various theses presented is outside the scope of a "review". (And for titles and authors, please have consideration for an overworked compositor and refer to Coward-McCann's ad elsewhere in this issue.) I suspect that more specific discussions of several of Modern Science Fiction's articles will appear in this magazine before long—the material is there, certainly, and I will be disappointed if some of the Advertiser's subscribers aren't stimulated by the book sufficiently to write a few articles of amplification or disagreement.

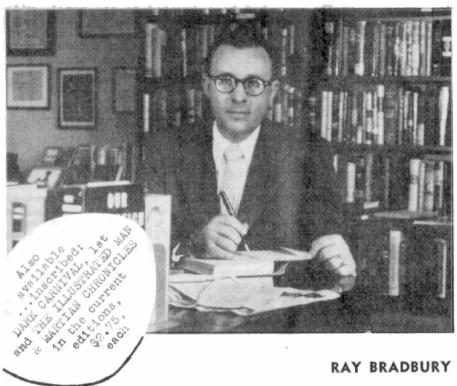
For now, I want to single out only one example from the wealth of well-organized theses included. In what those who are already science fiction enthusiasts will, I suspect, find to be the book's most stimulating essay, Reg Bretnor says:

The term (science fiction), in my opinion, is legitimately descriptive of three major categories of works, listed here in a descending order of interest and importance:

Those which reveal the author's awareness of the importance of the scientific method as a human function and of the human potentialities inherent in its exercise, and do this not only in plot and circumstance, but also through the thoughts and motivations of the characters;

Those which reveal such an awareness, but only in circumstance and plot; and,

Those which reveal that the author is aware only of certain potential products of the scientific method. (The degree of awareness here corresponds roughly to that



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sometimes found in our non - science fiction -- but with this difference: non - science fiction limits its awareness to those products of the scientific method already in existence. The difference is one of attitude, not of degree.)

With that yardstick in mind, thinking over the past year's books brings to mind very few that achieve Bretnor's first category; and many that don't even surmount the third. What is Clyde Beck's criticism of The Fetrified Planet (the review of the book in this issue)? Why, that Dr. Clark's introduction provided the basis for some excellent first category stories but that the three presented were merely category III. This, I think, is a highly serviceable yardstick. It is the one that must be incorporated into any system of literary criticism before that system can be used in science fiction's evaluation. It is the yard-stick over which so many otherwise skilled writers have ignominiously tripped when they have with only partially-founded confidence attempted science fiction. In short, Bretnor here has said in minimum wordage what several of the Advertiser's critics have less clearly stated with a repetition that need no longer occur.

But I've discussed but a portion of one passage from one of eleven articles. Even if it doesn't impress you as it does me, it seems most unlikely that you won't find something elsewhere in the book equally rewarding to you.

RAS

WEST OF THE SUN by Edgar Fangborn. Doubleday, 219 p., \$2.75.

The recent graduation of science fiction to the status of big business is a phenomenon which more than one devotee welcomes with a rueful sort of jubilation. New writers, new publishers, and presumably new readers are joining the ranks in droves. This is not quite all to the good. Only the completist collector will be sorry to see the total amount of available science fiction increase, and everyone concerned must be glad that so high a proportion of the new writers in the field are good writers. And yet the fact emerges that a story with a science fiction background is not necessarily a good science fiction story.

That I am making these remarks in connection with West of the Sun does not mean that I am singling the book out for dispraise, for it is a rather better than excellent novel, challenging, thought-provoking, and beautifully realized. Incidentally, the prospective buyer should be warned to pay no attention to the fact that the jacket blurb was written by someone who evidently did not bother to read the book beforehand, and locates the planet Lucifer "several light-years west of the Sun of Earth." Neither this nor any other scientific absurdity appears in the text. The story is that of a small and diverse group of interstellar pioneers who become marooned on a planet of a distant sun, and of the resolution of the three-way conflict that ensues from its being inhabited by two intelligent but widely divergent races. The author's sociological point of view will be commended by all right-thinking men, and is elucidated by incidents that show no

Man in Space

By HEINZ HABER

TO BE PUBLISHED IN APRIL

Someday soon—a few years hence, as many engineers reckon—huge rocket ships may pierce the last veil of atmosphere and carry their human load into the vast void of space. Many authorities believe that the development is inevitable. No matter whether we share this hope or not, we cannot afford to ignore it. The nation that first assembles a station in space, an ever-circling satellite from which the whole earth can be surveyed and threatened, will be in control of this planet.

Designers have left unanswered only the slightest engineering details of space-going rocket ships. Yet there arises the big question: Will not, where the machines may succeed, man himself fail? Will he be able to survive the journey beyond the sheltering atmosphere and live to fulfill his mission in space?

Man in Space is an authoritative study in which the author assigns man his precarious place in this great technical adventure of coming decades. Dr. Haber explains the serious obstacles that may yet prohibit man's travel through space, but he also relates what evidence there is to support the hope of man's survival there. In terms understandable to the layman, he shows how experiments in the laboratory and experiences in modern aircraft may be used for a critical appraisal of the difficulties that await man in space: the stresses placed on the crew during the powered ascent; the unearthly state of weightlessness with no "up" and "down"; the supply of breathing air and the control of temperature.

Man in Space is a fascinating story, in which medicine and astronomy, physics and psychology are pooled to show how he will react and how he may be protected in this domain of alien laws. It clears away popular misconceptions concerning space flight and substitutes the equally—if not more—entertaining facts, giving our imagination a real foothold on space. Finally the author shows how the shortcomings of man's earth-conditioned frame and mind will eventually determine the limits of the "space frontier."

320 pages, crown octavo (5%" x 8%"), illustrated with line drawings, \$3.75 The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. signs of being contrived for the purpose but evolve naturally from the basic situation he has chosen. The book is eminently worth the time and money of anyone who buys and reads novels for their literary worth.

But still the reader who is an admirer of science fiction per se will be left wishing that so much thought and writing skill had been devoted to awork to which the science part of the appellation had contributed more than background and stage-setting, and apprehensive that the very excellence of such books as this will lead us to forget the fact that science fiction can and should be more. Let us hope not. Let us hope that the search for the best in science fiction will still go on, and such books as West of the Sun will continue to be the minor prizes we pick up along the way.

Clyde Beck

THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, SECOND SERIES Edited by Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas. Little, Brown, 1953; 270 p., \$3.

In a one paragraph introduction the editors give their reason for breaking with the seven year tradition that every anthology have "an Introduction". They imply that already too much has been written in these Introductions, and make their own small contribution to the literature: "Science fiction -- and indeed the whole domain of imaginative literature -- is good reading."

Taking the cue from such experienced and able editors, this reviewer has decided to make a similar break with tradition in the matter of reviewing anthologies.

This book is good reading, and contains the following:

Robin, "Budding Explorer"; Graves, "The Shout"; Dewey, "The Tooth"; Struther, "Ugly Sister"; de Camp and Pratt, "The Black Ball"; Seabright, "The Hole in the Moon"; Finney, "The Third Level"; Bowen, "The Cheery Soul"; Fyfe, "Ransom"; Irwin, "The Earlier Service"; Nearing, "The Hyperspherical Basketball"; Wellman, "The Desrick on Yandro"; Henderson, "Come On, Wagon!"; Wyndham, "Jizzle"; Clingerman, "Stair Trick"; Bennett, "The Soothsayer"; Bester, "Hobson's Choice"; Goulart, "Letters to the Editor".

RAS

FLYING SAUCERS by Donald H. Henzel. Harvard, 1953; 319 p., \$4.75.

This is the first book to discuss its subject in the unromantic terms of natural phenomena. Its author (who is an astrophysicist at Harvard University) says "I do not deny that these (interplanetary craft) hypotheses explain the observations. Remember what Poincare said: you can fit any set of facts if you make your hypotheses complicated enough." I infer that Dr. Menzel might liken the interplanetary saucer hypothesis to that of a deity: it may be made to fit the facts of observation but should not be so conclusively accepted as to deter one's consideration of an explanation in

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terms of more accessible phenomena. (Any reader who may feel that, as a science fiction reader, he has a certain edge over the professor, will realize the injustice of such a judgment, when he examines the contents pages of the first two issues of Science Fiction Plus.)

Dr. Menzel's explanations of the saucer phenomena (which he says are real -- as real as a rainbow) are many and various. To mention a few might invite the charge that they don't explain some others of the sightings. But explanations for those others are here also. And where such explanation, within the realms of terrestrial meteorology, optics, etc., does not appear conclusive, one has the impression that the lack is in the observational data, not in the knowledge that is waiting to provide the explanation.

The interplanetary saucer believer is not, of course, thoroughly squelched by this book. The fact that terrestrial phenomena could account for all that has been reported does not constitute proof that alternative causes do not exist. But the pro-saucer enthusiast who does not read this book will be in the position of the deist who has not read, say, Frazer or Darwin or their more modern equivalents.

George D. Martindale

BALLROOM OF THE SKIES by John D. MacDonald. Greenberg, 1952; 206 p., \$2.75.

Dake Lorin's world is a circus clown in the middle of the high wire, clumsy, fearful and fumbling, ready at the next step to fall to destruction. It is the pre-war world, the pre-World War IV world of the end of the twentieth century. Lorin is an ex-columnist, at present engaged in helping to work out a three-way compromise among the surviving world powers that promises to bring peace on earth for long enough to allow a desperate mankind the chance to look around for something better. When Lorin's chief, at the end of a year of delicate negotiation that has brought success within grasping distance, inexplicably makes a deal which turns the whole project into a piece of cynical power politics, and then just as inexplicably dies, Lorin sets out to look for some answers.

Before his search is finished it has taken him very far afield indeed, and brought him up against a super-terrestrial race who are equipped with such advantages as mass-transmitters, an extensive control of paraphysical and parapsychological phenomena, and a master plan. As a result or lorin's lopsided conflict with this fortunate group it becomes evident that the poor old clown is not so clumsy after all, that under his floppy rags are the neat costume and trained physique of an accomplished performer.

Although one may disagree with MacDonald's thesis that qualities of leadership necessary to the survival of galactic man may only be developed on a world continually kept strained to the breaking point like the earth today, it has to be admitted that he has stated and defended it well and built around it a well-constructed story.

Clyde Beck

THE ALL-EDITOR ISSUE OF A LA SPACE

The third issue of A La Space will include a guest editorial by Ray Palmer, editor of OTHER WORLDS;

"How to Start to write Science Fiction" by Chet. S. Geier, managing editor of FATE.

"Not Important", a story by R. E. Multog, editor of Star Rockets.

Fan News by Shelby Vick, editor of CONFUSION.

An article, "Skyhook Fortress" by. W. G. Rieve, science editor of A LA SPACE.

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FUTURE TENSE, edited by Kendall Foster Crossen. Greenberg, 364 p., \$3.50.

The editors of anthologies, whose rate of spontaneous generation will soon cause them to outnumber their hosts, the editors of magazines, have come face to face with an ecological problem of serious scarcity of reprintable stories. The editor of the present volume has side-stepped the problem by tackling another, no less difficult: securing for his book worthy stories that in his words, "have never before appeared in print... Some of them were written for Future Tense, while others failed to please magazine editors for one reason or another."

The volume is nearly equally divided between reprints and new stories. The ones we've seen before are: Boucher, "The Ambassadors"; Kuttner, "Dream's End"; deFord, "Throwback"; Crossen, "Things of Distinction" (all from Startling Stories); Moore, "We, the People" (from Science Fiction Quarterly); and Moore, "Scarlet Dream" (Weird Tales and Avon Fantasy Reader).

New stories are by H.F. Heard, Bruce Elliott, Martin Gardner (another of his delightful topological fantasies); Rose Bedrick Elliott, James Blish, John D. MacDonald, and Christopher Monig. For printing any of these that would otherwise have been neglected, our gratitude is due Crossen.

Jack Kelsey

ROCKETS BEYOND THE EARTH by Martin Caidin McBride, 1952; 304 p., \$4.50.

Beginning with a chapter about the earth's atmosphere and continuing into the subjects of military craft and of the future of satellite stations and interplanetary flight, this is a reasonably satisfactory book on a technical level several cuts below Clarke and Ley. I am prejudiced against the book because, although the many military and commercial sources of photographs are credited, the equally numerous, crudely-executed drawings include direct steals from Bonestell and the illustrators of Arthur C. Clarke's books.

John Elstrom

THE CONTINENT MAKERS AND OTHER TALES OF THE VIAGENS by L. Sprague de Camp. Twayne, 1953; 272 p., \$2.95.

You've read most of these; enough, surely, to know whether or not you'd like to have the series in permanent format. Included titles are: "The Inspector's Teeth". "Summer wear", "Finished", "The Galton Whistle" (published as "Ultrasonic God" in Future), "The Animal - Cracker Flot", "Git Along!", "Ferpetual Motion" (Wide-Open Planet" in Future), and "The Continent Makers".

THE TITAN by P. Schuyler Miller Fantasy Press, 1952; 252 p., \$3.00.

Miller has long been a favorite of mine, and although none of my favorite Miller stories are to be found here (presumably because of previous anthologization), many of the char-

acteristics of his polished craftsmanship that I admire are in evidence in this collection. Previous copyrights begin with 1931 and include 1944. The stories: "The Titan", "As Never Was", "Old Man Mulligan", "Spawn", "In the Good Old Summer Time", "Gleeps", "The Arrhenius Horror", "Forgotten".

John Elstrom

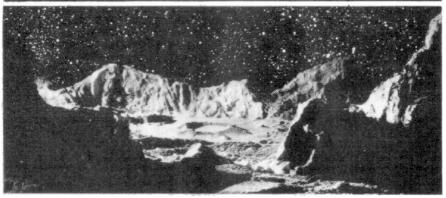
SPACE SERVICE edited by Andre Norton. World, 277 p., \$2.50.

The publishers of this one call it a juvenile. Inasmuch as all but two of the included stories are from Astounding Science Fiction -- to my way of thinking, the science fiction magazine -- I find myself somewhat shaken by that viewpoint. Shall I henceforth be ashamed of my reading preference? or take pride in the fact that, old duffer that I am, I retain the requisite sense of wonder and flexibility of imagination to enjoy reading seriously thought-through speculative problems that are foreign to our present, short-sighted world?

This volume's focal theme concerns the men of the spaceways. The stories were chosen for their variety of protagonists: space-ship commander, communications officer, galactic trader, scientific explorer, pioneer, etc.

The stories, which you may or may not have thought of as juveniles when you read them, are: Kahn, "Command" and "For the Public"; Fyfe, "Star-Linked" and "Implode and Feddle"; Sheldon, "Chore For a Spaceman"; Cogswell, "The Specter General"; Dickson, "Steel Brother"; Winter, "Expedition Folychrome"; Gallun, "Return of a Legend"; and Kornbluth, "That Share of Glory".

Jack Kelsey



A lunar landscape by Morris Scott Dollens.

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Notes From the Editor

PUBLISHERS: GIVE YOUR SCIENCE FICTION A CHANCE!

Not very long ago -- a year or two, perhaps -- one of the general magazine articles that have attempted to explain to the public what science fiction is all about related an experience of a large wholesale dealer in book remainders. He had become aware of the existence of science fiction and had written to several of the science fiction publishing houses, asking what they had to be remaindered. In due time he arrived at the very surprising fact that there were no science fiction remainders.

A 1951 issue of Publishers' Weekly printed a long article about the facts of science fiction of interest to booksellers. Its major thesis was that, whereas most other fiction has its strongest sale in the first several weeks after publication and drops off to a negligible sale thereafter, science fiction book sales usually had no such initial peak butdid continue selling steadily for several years -- the field wasn't old enough yet to provide statistics concerning the end of the tapering off stretch!

Yet now we are seeing in rapidly increasing numbers cases of science fiction books being remaindered only three months The treatment of science fiction or so after publication. by the more prominent reviews and newspapers being what it is, we find in these cases of quick remaindering the strange circumstance of the more influential reviews of the book appearing after the books have been remaindered. A review in this publication reaches its readers from four to thirteen weeks after receipt of the review copy; reviews in Astounding, Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, and Galaxy appear usually one to three months later. Since it is principally such media as these that are prepared to give science fiction serious attention, no publisher should consider that his book has been given a fair chance even to demonstrate what its sales are going to be until a month or so after its reviews in them have appeared.

Do the publishers perhaps think that science fiction readers, who are more concerned than the general populace about the future, want to read only "the latest"? In a large degree they would be right in so thinking. But most likely they would not understand what we think is "the latest".

To a person who reads only newspapers, what happened day before yesterday is of no interest -- it'd be "old stuff". But what the science fiction reader thinks of as "old" and "new" is referred to quite a different time-scale.

In respect to his awareness of the processes and influences of scientific method, the science fiction reader is three hundred years ahead of the majority of the populace. And one gathers that on that score science fiction writers are that far ahead of 99% of their non-science fiction writing colleagues.

The fact that in 1940 the science fiction reader was at least five years ahead of most other laymen in his awareness of the imminence and probable significance of nuclear weapons has been accorded considerable publicity. But how about the eleven-year-old discovery of a planet in 61 Cygni C? What I considered to be the biggest news story of its year hasn't yet reached the awareness of the average book reader...and his ignorance in that regard may well extend into the next century.

Yes! Science fiction readers are in many respects far ahead of the thinking of the bulk of humanity. So far ahead, it seems to me, that the passage of three months, or three or thirteen years, will seldom obsolete a good science fiction story. If the discovery of an extra-solar planet, if cybernetics and endocrinology, yes, if rocketry aren't the "latest things", they are recent enough on our time scale, the one that to our viewpoint is the one that matters to humanity, not yet to be "old stuff".

ON THE ECONOMICS OF BOOKSELLING (AND BUYING)

Among my bookseller friends is one whose shop is an oasis of culture in a fashionable suburban desert. It is perhaps characteristic of such a shop that business is perennially slow. At almost any time there are to be found in the back room more of the proprietor's friends indulging in coffee and bookly conversation than there are cash customers out front. (But, then, few are the habitues of either room who can long resist the charms of the other!)

Most of this shop's stock is timeless in its interest. The true bookman, the scholar, and all else by whom the pleasures of literature and of learning are not thought of as the peculiar province of the university may find a wealth of desiderata on its shelves. So it was only natural that I make the suggestion of his including a section of science fiction. My arguments (and those of Reg Bretnor and other contributors to his <u>Modern Science Fiction</u>) had the desired effect -- and the choice of stock was left to me.

On my recommendation he ordered books published as long ago as 1945; many later but yet not "recent" titles. Such and such a book, I argued, would deserve attention for at least a decade; barring only such social catastrophe as would put him out of business anyway.

Perhaps you can imagine our feelings, his and mine, when even before receipt some of the books. I'd thus recommended were announced as book club titles at a one dollar price!

Where else, any bookseller will ask you, do you find the practice of manufacturers entering into ruinous competition with their retailers? Neither booksellers nor I have any quarrel with low-priced books -- but consider the plight of the bookseller who has to pay more at his "wholesale" price for a title than his (lost) customers pay for it from a book club. His remaining stock has to be sold at a loss, and he can't reorder at a price that permits him to offer the book

at the book club price.

So my bookseller friend has come to take a dim view of his science fiction section. Where I had once sincerely advised his looking on it as stock of long-term interest to serious readers he now, perforce, classes it with the run-of-the-mill mystery, the breast seller, and the other ephemerae that have no place in such a shop as his.

So much for the bookseller's position. How do science fiction book clubs affect us as readers? Book club selections soon become o.p. But our regret at seeing first rate titles become unavailable to tomorrow's new science fiction readers is more than balanced by our present opportunity to build our libraries cheaply.

I have often argued that only a penny-wise-pound-foolish person is willing to spend an entire evening with a book that he won't give an hour's pay for. But in the circumstance of there being more science fiction available than we have time to read, a willingness to wait six months or so for a 2/3 saving is quite reasonable.

To those who, like myself, are of limited financial means, I would suggest that notice be taken of the publishers whose books are selected by the book clubs, and that we wait a few months before buying any of their books; if they don't become book club selections (or remainders) they'll still be available at the original price.

ON THE ECONOMICS OF SCIENCE FICTION ADVERTISER

Because this issue was growing to a size my check book could not accommodate, something had to go. Considerations of timeliness have led to Arthur Cox's article on Jack Vance yielding to this issue's large review section. Sorry.

To repeat an announcement from the January issue, SFA's costs of production have necessitated a subscription price increase. Beginning June 1st the price will be one dollar for 6 issues. Orders (including renewals) received prior to that date will be credited at the old 8 for a dollar rate.

I continue to get complaints about the lack of ads from fans offering books and magazines for sale. Beyond making available the largest possible circulation, I don't know what I can do to remedy this deficiency. I also continue to get letters telling of downright phenomenal response to small ads. Recent Micro Advertisers reported 34 and 18 orders. Surely consideration of those two facts should impress on more of you the advantage of using these pages when you have material to dispose of. . . or fan magazine circulations to build up.

Those of you who find SFA's rates too high are again advised to try advertising in the Kaymar Trader (retitled from Stf. Trader). This magazine, published at 1028 Third Avenue, So. Moorhead, Minnesota, costs only 25¢ for four issues and offers advertising space at \$1 a page and pro rata. . . and ads are free if you supply mimeographed sheets ready to be stapled into the issue! A dime will bring you a sample issue.

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The third issue, just out last April, contained "Faint-Heart," a story of man and space by Gene Hunter; "Villa Strega," a first fantasy by Andrew Gregg; "Lovers and Otherwise," an article about The Lovers by Philip José Farmer; "This Little O, the Earth," a delightful essay by William F. Temple; and "Did You Say Reminisce?" an article about the old days in science fiction by Bob Olsen.

And look what's ahead: "The Question," a distinguished story by David H. Keller, M. D.; "Last Day," a moving tale by A. Bertram Chandler; "Carnations in the Snow," a timely and touching yarn by Arthur J. Burks; "Through Crisis with the Gonedaidins," a brilliant stylistic experiment by David R. Bunch; "Pi Line to Print," an interview with Fredric Brown by Alice Bullock; "The Man Who Lived Twice," the story in back of Francis Flagg by Alden Lorraine; "The Eight Hundredth Hundred-Day," a story of the far future by William L. Bade; "Calling Doctor Caligarii" an analysis of horror movies by Robert Bloch; "No Bems in TV," the background of a television science fiction show by Dick Morgan; "Fantasy is in Their Hands." handwriting analyses of five leading fantasy authors by Leo Louis Martello . . .

The list could go on and on-well-known writers like Wilson Tucker, E. C. Tubb, Henderson Starke, Charles Beaumont--talented discoveries like A. Winfield Garske, Gilman Fryer, Julia Arnoldo--all these and many more are coming up in the future of fantastic worlds.

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