

(dissecting)
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THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Operational Procedures

Supervised by
Richard Delap

The heat of summer produces all sorts of strange phenomena, but in the sf genre where odd happenings are par for the course, it all seems to be taken for granted by the even stranger readership. This summer the heat was intense--one magazine died and another was reborn from a death of several years ago--but readers straining under the weight of lethargy didn't seem to take much notice of either event.

1970 doesn't seem to be taking shape as a year the magazines can point to with much pride, but it seems part and parcel with the scraggly run of most other dramatic presentations of the year, from film and stage drama to television (was that ever any good?) to novels, both sf and mainstream. Does it seem that each foray year in a new decade comes on weak, that writers have huffed and puffed to the end of the previous ten years and the zero-year reflects the limp product of a limp crew? Or am I just making things up again?

Summer 1970 follows the pattern of the previous months closely--take it easy, ride it out, it can get either better or worse. It can't stay sluggish much longer. I tell you, it's the heat.

Magazines for JULY-AUGUST, 1970

AMAZING STORIES and FANTASTIC:

Ted White is on his moral hobby-horse again with these issues, and if he sounded suspiciously foolish with previous ramblings he sounds definitely so this time around. In AMAZING he launches an attack on Dr. Frederic Wertham with amusing little-boy vengeance (and Wertham needs no help in being a public fool, he does well enough on his own), and in FANTASTIC "discusses" Heinlein, drugs and youth with all the rationality of a delirious man staked out on an anthill. I mean, it may make funny reading to some, but twelve pages devoted to a couple of straws in a wind already overburdened with straws strikes me as decidedly tacky showmanship. The articles are again generally on the dull side, though AMAZING's science column seems to be picking up a bit of steam. FANTASTIC has a nice (and neatly logotyped!) cover by Jeff Jones.

AMAZING -- JULY:

Serial:

Orn (part one) -- Piers Anthony.

Novelette:

Invasion of Privacy -- Bob Shaw.

Dead people seemingly returned to life, a small boy in danger because he knows too much, a desperate father who uncovers secrets too fast and too easily--none of this jells on an intelligent dramatic level but, damn!, it is so easy to read. Shaw should be ashamed to write such nonsense, but the guilt is equal because I should be ashamed for liking it even a little.

Short Story:

We Know Who We Are -- Robert Silverberg.

The setting is hinted to be another world where a mechanical city cares for the intellectually smug but backsliding humans within it. The reader is forced to accept a man's breakdown as stemming from sexual attraction and mystery, but the idea begs for more attention than given here. (This story also appears in the July '70 issue of ADAM.)

Reprint:

History In Reverse (1939) -- Lee Laurence.

Science:
Color the Sky -- Greg Benford & David Book.

FANTASTIC -- AUGUST:

Serial:
Always the Black Knight (conclusion) -- Lee Hoffman.

Short Stories:
The Good Trip -- Ursula K. LeGuin.

LeGuin's story seems to be antithetical to Ellison's "bad" trip, "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin", and although I have no reason to side with her choice, I like that she doesn't strain so hard for pyrotechnics and comes across with a more rational-sounding (but, actually, no more rational) approach to the drug bent, the psychic bent, and the inevitable blend. Very readable.

Music in the Air -- Ova Hamlet, "as told to Richard A. Lupoff".

This generally disappointing series of sf spoofs continues with this fluff about Cornelius Jerry--"symbol of tomorrow's today"--replete with a nutsy hijack, a planeload of hectic and unfunny characters, and endless quotes from the New York DAILY NEWS (12/19/69). It's carelessly strained beyond its capacity.

A Gift from the Gozniks -- Gordon Eklund.

After a loud debut with "Dear Aunt Annie", Eklund tries his hand at a quieter tale, one about a rural household and the young girl whose sudden appearance and extended visit herald strange events. Smoothly written but ordinary, I don't think it really fulfills what Eklund wanted it to do. I would still say, however, that Eklund is a writer to watch closely.

Say Goodby to the Wind -- J. G. Ballard.

A new Vermilion Sands story is usually the only thing worth notice in Ballard's recent work, and this one cleaves together with more glue than mere mood--namely, the bio-fabric fashions, a symbolical but convincing creation that serves as a sharp focus for both the personal and sociological emotion-wringing. Good.

Treaty -- Lincoln Albert (pseudonym for two uncredited authors).

As negotiations finalize for Earth to make room for and give aid to the surviving aliens of a dying world, this story builds to a punch that is unforeseeable only in that it is unforgiveably preposterous. Besides which it's an old hat which many others have already decorated...and with far more success.

Directions Into the Darkness -- Robert E. Toomey, Jr.

Searching for "a god" on an alien world, an Earthman suddenly finds himself a pawn in a political search-and-destroy tactic. If a bit thin in detail, the story does hold interest until Toomey foolishly opts for a "shock" finale that is shocking only in its mediocrity. A dud.

Reprint:

The Elixir of Invisibility (1940) -- Henry Kuttner.

Article:

The Nature of Science Fiction -- Alexei Panshin.

Article:

Fantasy Fandom -- John J. Pierce.

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ANALOG:

Disregarding even ANALOG's straightjacket standards, the July issue is fictionally one of the weakest in some time, which may be why JWC's editorial is even more predisposed than usual (the "usual" being pretty sickening anyway). His discussion of biological warfare as "anything but 'unnatural'" is a clever, immoral tract which guides the reader away from the real problem in a mess of double-talk about rabbits and bacteria that "have no loyalties". (The day he can show me a bacterium plunking down 60¢ for ANALOG, I may give him more credence.) The science articles are of possible interest to the technically-minded,

but Miller's book reviews should appeal to everyone interested in gathering facts with a less sterile approach. Oh, ANALOG, ANALOG, will you never realize that people are what matter....?

JULY:

Serial:

Star Light (part two) -- Hal Clement.

Novelette:

Per Strategem -- Robert Chilson.

Supposing an alien society in which intrigues and power struggles are identifiable to the reader poses little problem to Chilson, who has absolutely no interest in developing more than boring stock characters (human or alien) to pad his leaden fictional confidence that man is a rascally, loveably clever beast who far outshines his alien counterparts and deserves only praise for doing so. Excuse me, I think I'm going to be sick....

Short Stories:

Beau Farcson Regrets -- Jack Wodhams.

Poor Farcson, all the way back to the 18th century only to break his leg, have his time-travel apparatus stolen and become stranded in an age where the everyday comforts are a painful burden to a modern man. It may instructively entertain some pre-teeners but is obvious and insulting to any adult reader with a grain of sense.

Rare Events -- D. A. L. Hughes.

The Institute for Advanced Studies turns out to be a battleground for scientists with opposed theories on the study of "rare events". The story as such is a mere tour through the varied conflicts that are more dull than amusing. Routine.

Ark IV -- Jackson Burrows.

Another society which worships the ruling computer system, this time not realizing that their world is a traveling planet periodically draining other worlds to supply itself with goods. A little reprogramming and, viola!, everything's hunky-dory once again. (Wouldn't it be nice if all were so simple!)

Science:

Zero Resistance -- Walter C. Walterscheid.

AUGUST:

Serial:

Star Light (part three) -- Hal Clement.

Novelettes:

Meet a Crazy Lady Week -- W. Macfarlane.

A followup to "Ravenshaw of WBY, Inc.", in which Macfarlane once more shows his flair for pert dialogue as Ravenshaw's investigation of "odd" inventions again lands him in the middle of alien doings. Both funnier and better-paced than the first story, this could well become a very likeable series as Ravenshaw and his secretary, Nell, are characters strong enough to carry these tales quite a distance.

Brillo -- Ben Bova & Harlan Ellison.

The characteristic Ellison sassiness works very well in tandem with Bova and imbues the familiar tactics of this story with freshness, humor, and a stinging bite of fear. "Brillo" is a robot assigned beat duty with Polchik, a young cop with just enough experience to know that rulebooks should be more flexibly applied than a robot can understand. It's not a new story, true, but it's seldom treated as humanely or as joltingly as it is here. (Odd, too, that JWC accepted the usual Ellison pessimism which adds the solid gutkick to the climax; hopefully he will continue to see the dramatic value of such departures.)

Short Stories:

Heavy Thinker -- Howard L. Myers.

When a group of humans discover a friendly alien who can induce telepathy between those near to him, the humans are frustrated that the alien is too

large to be transported to the human worlds. The problem's answer is much too simple, and Myers' delay of it to the story's conclusion is entirely nonsensical. Excelsior! -- Robert Chilson.

The tiny predatory ommas of Salamander are no threat to man, and, in fact, have proved to be an easily-conditioned element in the local ecology. Then, when one man is attacked, he begins to wonder if perhaps a danger has been overlooked--and Chilson's fast story turns into a wooden lecture.

Science:

Backpack Spacecraft -- Walter B. Hendrickson, Jr.

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FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION:

F&SF again runs a good balance with the content of these two issues, and special mention should be made of the excellent quality of articles. Asimov's science columns are among the best he has written, the July issue featuring a plea for world unity that is both movingly intelligent and painfully desperate. Asimov should do more of this, using the selling medium of his name when necessary, since the cause is too pressing and the interest thus far inadequate and growing too slowly. James Blish and (especially) Joanna Russ contribute worthwhile discussion of new books, while L. Sprague de Camp rightly praises Rosemary Sutcliff's Sword at Sunset in his sprightly discussion of Arthurian legends. Nicely packaged (excellent Walotsky cover for July) and thoughtfully edited, F&SF still maintains a healthy lead on most competitors.

JULY:

Novelettes:

His Coat So Gay -- Sterling E. Lanier.

This latest Brigadier Ffellowes yarn is more interesting for its setting--Eastern Depression America--than for its actual story, which is a weak horror-melodrama involving a secret cult, a pretty girl and an avenging monster. There are still the quick Lanier touches of humor, along with the overall farcical glaze, but not enough this time to wash away a heartless undertone.

The Mystery of His Flesh -- Dean R. Koontz.

Opening as a chase story in which a doctor and an android are fleeing the pursuing agents of World Authority, Koontz never strays far from this premise even when later developments aim for more profound meaning. If the plot doesn't really present this future world with much conviction, the pace never lags and the protagonists are an engaging pair who create enough interest to make this a pleasant diversion.

Short Stories:

Making Titan -- Barry N. Malzberg.

A trip to Titan forms the surround for this story of reality seen through the opposing wills of three troubled men, and seen not at all clearly. Malzberg's symbology is often as fuzzy as a dandelion (and I suspect about as weighty), but it's suspended in such a slick medium that it's almost immune to criticism. Make of it what you will.

Starlight Shining Through Her Eyes -- Neil Shapiro.

Likely pleasing to the traditionalists and anathema to the New-Wavers, the editor calls this story of a boy's dream and an exploration of the moon "romantic". My reason balks at the lack of rationale but my sentiment is treacly and seeps through anyhow.

Ishmael In Love -- Robert Silverberg.

In spite of a contrived and essentially needless criminal episode, Silverberg's funny/sad story of the unrequited love of a dolphin for a human female is diverting reading. The dolphin, Ishmael, is briefly but convincingly characterized, and his effort to have the best of both worlds is a professionally-pared treatment of a classic theme. Good.

Tom Cat -- Gary Jennings.

When a dotty old lady wants to will her six billion dollars to her cat, Puffpuss, it isn't long until her nephew decides to dispose of the animal and (wearing a stolen mink) pose as Puffpuss himself. It's almost perfectly insane, and you'll have to be a perfect sourpuss to frown at Jennings' delightful farce.

The State of the Art -- Robin Scott Wilson.

A scientist is successful in everything but what he most needs, which is love. In one last effort to capture the affections of the woman he adores, he uses his scientific knowledge to aid his seduction. Beautifully written but marred by a telegraphed silly ending; you're better off just skipping the final page.

Verse:

Clean-up -- Doris Pitkin Buck.

Article:

The Quarter-Acre Round Table -- L. Sprague de Camp.

Science:

My Planet 'Tis of Thee -- Isaac Asimov.

AUGUST:

Serial:

The Goat Without Horns (part one) -- Thomas Burnett Swann.

Novelette:

Confessions -- Ron Goulart.

Freelance writer Jose Silvera returns in this regulated mystery encrusted with Goulart's usual irregularities. The author's humor ranges from the abysmal to the hilarious, with a good bit of current social satire thrown in for good/bad measure, so the final decision here rests with the reader, who can best gauge what turns him on.

Short Stories:

The Self-priming, Solid-state Electronic Chicken -- Jon Lucas.

When a couple of con men plan to take a poor inventor (who claims to have built a machine that makes eggs without the chicken's help) for all the cash he's got, they find out that more money's in the offing because the damned machine works. Fair humor.

The Good-bye Birthday -- Maureen Bryan Exter.

Exter whitewashes her cynicism with a good bit of sentiment in this story of the future where childhood is in effect sterilized by a society devoted to satisfying the selfishness of adults. I disbelieve the escape route she opens for her tragic charmers, but it's difficult not to feel pleasure that it exists. Effective, in a limited way.

Pebble In Time -- Cynthia Goldstone & Avram Davidson.

You've heard of Brigham Young and Utah, that great western bastion of religion, but did you realize that there is a zigzag parallel between the Latter Day Saints and Frisco's current "bizarre" culture? Yes, yes, and the authors make a clever and amusing freak-out of it too. Fun.

Out of Control -- Raylyn Moore.

Both writers and readers should enjoy this neatly-mapped, acid version of what makes a writer...or, if you prefer, a non-writer. The ingredients of this familiar premise--mental instability, boredom and isolation, inadequate instruction--are given a close examination which provides the needed dimension. Good.

Science:

The Stars In Their Courses -- Isaac Asimov.

GALAXY:

With a nice cover by Jack Gaughan and a bushel of advance publicity, Heinlein's new novel begins in the July issue, immediately preceding a switch to a

bimonthly schedule and an advance in cover price to 75¢--ahh, Jakobsson, you couldn't have timed it better, you crafty devil! Disregarding the novel--which has already been greatly disliked in the fan press and which I've only skimmed since I'm waiting for the Putnam hardcover--GALAXY pulls off two pretty good issues incorporating a variety of stories to appeal to almost any reader's taste. The only regular feature, Algis Budrys's book column, is worthwhile reading even if you disagree with the man as often as I. Gaughan's interior illos are better than some of his recent (and rushed?) work and especially good for the Heinlein book. GALAXY has a way to go yet but it's moving in the right direction at last.

JULY:Serial:

I Will Fear No Evil (part one) -- Robert A. Heinlein.

Novelettes:

The Throwbacks -- Robert Silverberg.

The year is 2382 and the world's population of 75,000,000,000 is largely ensconced in "urbmons", giant vertical cities enclosing people in more than merely limited space. Jason Quevedo, an historian who is formulating a theory of a "psychic evolution" of humanity, finds his own thoughts at odds with the norm of his time. The story marks a big breakthrough for the magazine--a number of taboo four-letter words and several explicitly sexual honesties--not quite so big a one for Silverberg, who makes his environment more interesting than his characters' motivations. Not a bad story, just unbalanced and therefore not entirely satisfying.

The All-at-Once Man -- R. A. Lafferty.

Theology and/or Lafferty buffs (must be the same thing, actually) may find delight in this tale of a man who seeks to live all the different aspects of his life at one time. Others may find some difficulty holding with the abstract contents since the ideas are strung out over a relatively thin "plot". For fans, yes; for others, at your own risk.

Short Stories:

Goodbye Amanda Jean -- Wilma Shore.

The internal logic of this story is that people are killing one another right and left, collecting heads and scalps as trophies and saving the bodies for backyard barbecues. Logic, did I say? Yes, in a crazy twisted way it is, for its glimpse of the true meaning of psychological adjustment is startlingly accurate. (Not to be read over dinner, however....)

The Hookup -- Dannie Plachta.

Plachta's one-pager about an American-Russian orbital astronaut hookup is too minor to make much fuss over...more like a written cartoon than a story, I'd say. You may like it, you may not; either way, it doesn't really matter much.

Ask a Silly Question -- Andrew J. Offutt.

How long's it been since you read another computer story? A day, week, month? Don't despair! Here comes Offutt with a new one set on the first ship moving to attain light-speed. The computer's final answer (or, rather, question) is succinct enough to make one wish the preceding astronomical chatter were less interminable.

Sittik -- Anne McCaffrey.

Can a word destroy? McCaffrey's tiny horror story attempts to convey the fear behind an unknown power-of-semantics, but it's just all too vague and a bit too homespun to achieve the desired effect. Routine.

Article:

Containers for the Condition of Man -- Lauri Virta.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER:Serial:

I Will Fear No Evil (part two) -- Robert A. Heinlein.

Short Novel:

The Day After Judgment -- James Blish.

Blish's Black Easter, which ended with the demons of Hell unleashed upon the unready Earth to the tune of "God is Dead", had some critics muttering in their beer about extraneous detail, but unable to effectively deride the cleverness with which Blish's theological deftness had been applied. This sequel picks up exactly where the first ended, yet for all its amusing character interplay and not unintentionally funny dialogue and "in" jokes, it never completely overcomes the impression that it is an awfully extended anticlimax, one which carries a potent sting but only at the end of a cumbrously long tail. The plot is built around the search to discover whether God really is dead (or only sleeping), alternating at a rapid pace with military attempts to destroy the occupying force of demons inhabiting the now-risen city of Dis. Readers of the first story should find it reasonable entertainment, but both they and the author will weep over GILAXY's horrible typesetting.

Short Stories:

About a Secret Crocodile -- R. A. Lafferty.

The fact that Lafferty's plot--possibly an analogy of the present, possibly just a story, probably both--is unexpectedly mundane doesn't keep him from filling it with delicious barbs: "No persons were killed except several uninvolved bystanders." Less than Lafferty's usual is still more than many another's best.

Power Play -- Dannie Plachta.

A group of scientists investigate the claim of a woman who says she has a rapport with her umbrella and can make it spin at will, and this little short-short surprises the reader who might not have seriously considered what "rapport" means. Very amusing.

Moon Heat -- Ernest Taves.

A magician steals a moon rock from a NASA exhibit, and ensuing difficulties include a perplexed mistress, alien intelligences and at least one missing wife. The plot is a tattered rag but the slightly overindulged and often funny characters keep it brash enough to work moderately well.

Verse:

Coordinates -- Sonya Dorman.

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IF:

Not really much to say about this issue--lots of bad short stories, a dreary letter column used more to fill up space than to reflect reader-response, and a passable book column by Lester del Rey. If, if, if, if, if--that's the whole problem, only if...*sigh*

JULY-AUGUST:

Serial:

The Misspelled Magician (conclusion) -- David Gerrold & Larry Niven.

Novelette:

Second-Hand Stonehenge -- Ernest Taves.

With a bag-full of cliché plot devices and an eye for some gently mocking humor, Taves gets far more out of his story of visitors from the Pleiades than he has a right to. His petty hero and "Miss Universe" heroine are ridiculous as people but fun as types, which seems to be the calculated effect. Light, snappy reading...for the hell of it.

Short Stories:

The Fifth Planet -- Larry Eisenberg.

What begins well--as a brisk story of a resident psychiatrist who becomes entranced with and finally believing of a patient's wild tale--becomes desperate with sticky little plot twists that are increasingly idiotic.

Time Piece --- Joe Haldeman.

The title is finally worked into a brief and defressing finale to this story of a space/time soldier and his most recent battle encounter with the enemy "snails". But other than the climactic simile there seems to be little point to it all. Routine.

Equals Four -- Piers Anthony.

Anthony's funny galactic dentist, Dr. Dillingham, is off to the planet Hobgoblin to interest the grouchy natives in prosthodontic techniques available from his university, as well as to "test" applicants for a position as his assistant. It's a fast and fun addition to this series, one of the least noted yet pleasantest in recent sf.

The Communication Machine -- Lee Harding.

A dreary melodrama of science vs. art involving a man who invents a machine able to link minds in "direct" communication and the poet who sees in it the death of all art, words and human aspiration. A total bore.

What's Become of Screwloose? --- Ron Goulart.

Goulart's fondness for comedic views of the future of man and machine does not wear well after several repetitious stories, and this search for a missing girl who is examining a missing past which keeps bobbing up in the present is not one of the author's better efforts. Not at all.

Grandfather Pelts -- Neal Barrett, Jr.

Klaywelder is a superslick superthief, but the final stop in his planets-wide spree of illegal pelts-gathering proves his worth--and his undoing, since Barrett seems to feel a tacky "moral" ending is in order. What a shame.

Dark, Dark, the Dead Star -- George Zebrowski & Jack Dann.

As doctors struggle to save a spaceman who has undergone a terrifying experience leaving him as near to death as a man can go, the authors concentrate on conveying the sensations of space-death but dilute the good effect with an ending of slushy emotionalism.

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VENTURE:

This is the final issue of VENTURE, and a rough finale it is too since it expires in a blaze of crud, keeping to the end its tired assortment of worthless stories, Ron Goulart's vulgar so-called book reviews, and the general lively atmosphere of an unkempt graveyard. The same editor (Edward L. Ferman) who does such a fine job on F&SF killed this magazine by ignoring the standards he uses for the other magazine. All I want to know is...why?

AUGUST:Short Novel:Beastchild --- Dean R. Koontz.

The alien Naoli have met humans in space and have then proceeded to Earth, destroying all but a few scattered survivors which they diligently are murdering one by one. But Hulann, an alien archaeologist probing in Earth's rubble, is unable to resist his urge to protect Leo, an 11-year-old boy he finds hiding in his diggings. The awesomely-powered Hunter, an alien agent of destruction, is determined to kill them both, so after introductory explanations the story mires down into a cat-and-mouse run of silly coincidence, pretentious moralizing and the most abhorrent stream of abominable writing you're likely to see this year. Ranging from confused metaphors and senseless similes--"There was a sepulcher silence on the land, save for the constant humming moan of the wind and the swish of the flakes as they drifted over one another like specks of wet sand."--to a child who speaks like an informational computer readout, to a bogging array of trashy sentiment, the plot stacks one stupidity onto another until all is so wobbly the slightest gust will topple it...and Koontz's climax is as gusty as possible. It is not only bad, it is contemptible.

Short Stories:

Survival Course -- J. W. Schutz.

A spoiled and nearly defenseless cat, stranded on a planet filled with murderous plants and animals, somehow finds a way to survive until his owner returns. It's a very naive story, suitable for children in read-aloud sessions but not much good for any adult-oriented publication.

The Orgy -- Larry Eisenberg.

"General Hinsley was bored."--so begins Hinsley's descent to relieve his state by engaging to meet the Enchantress. The shallow revenge theme ties it all together very poorly, and it ends with the reader as bored as poor Hinsley.

How We Won the Monodyne -- Joseph Renard.

If the Indians decide to recapture their continent, they just might decide to send everyone else to the moon, or so supposes Renard in this weak farce that assumes if it's in bad taste it must be funny. Tain't so, but it is in very bad taste.

Prosthete -- Basil Wells.

Are artificial bodies the answer to lives that are now shattered by accidents which create human vegetables? It's a relevant question, but not even a glimmer of a relevant answer is given in this mawkish bowl of mush. Awful.

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WORLDS OF TOMORROW:

After an absence of several years WoT returns to the stands as a for-the-moment irregularly-published break from routine for the Galaxy magazines. Once a poorly-distributed sister magazine, WoT sees rebirth with a different concept in design (single columns of easy-to-read print) but little fiction-wise to distinguish it. This debut issue is mostly disappointing, from a generally uninteresting lineup of stories to an unattractive cover (but nice logo) by Jack Gaughan. But then debut issues often aren't really much to make judgment by, so let's chalk this one up to history and wait for the next.

ISSUE 24, 1970:

Novelettes:

In the Land of Love -- George H. Smith.

There's nothing to be said for Smith's story without becoming vehemently nasty about authors who vulgarly exploit the current social scene to turn out trash like this supposed satire of the "love" generation. It is cheap and tawdry, offensive to both the subject of its attempted humor and to the unwary reader.

Of Death What Dreams -- Keith Laumer.

Laumer expands his introductory opening (also used by four other authors) into a story of a future stratified society in which Bailey moves from the "Euthanasia Center" to the underworld Preke territory and up to the highest level possible, the Blue Tower. The journey has some occasional interest--the "Reprise" sequence, especially, has good moments--but the climax is welded into place with one of the silliest bits of dramatic hash I've ever read. (It's really a shame that all these authors responded so tritely to the very interesting opening.)

The State vs. Susan Quod -- Noel Loomis.

The time is 2560 A.D. and the world is tottering on the brink of financial ruin as one incredibly rich man corners the gold market. Against this background of unrest, which includes the infiltration of high officials by nearly undetectable androids, is told the obvious but slickly-written love story. Loomis' final story is readable but not memorable.

Short Stories:

The Bridge -- Piers Anthony.

A risque (rather than "dirty" sf-sex story concerning an affair between a normal man and a nine-inch-tall woman, Anthony's tale offers a perfectly rea-

sonable explanation for this odd situation. Nothing remarkable, to be sure, but funny and for a change very upbeat.

Serum-SCB -- James Bassett.

Discovering a serum to cure "the virus of human ill-nature", Dr. Tabory innoculates the world but spares himself, soon finding he's bored and anxious to return war to the now-peaceful Earth--an easy set-up for the "Dr. Strange-love" ending. Routine.

Tell Me -- Edward Y. Breese.

Breese attempts a shock tale in which a spaceman tells of his encounter with a humanoid race, his efforts to impress them with his powers, and his eventual crucifixion. The whole thing, including the double-shock climax, is muffed by trite handling.

Histoport 3939 -- Mark Power.

How to escape from a world with a fortune in rare antigrav gas? Simple, just marry one of the aliens who can naturally transport the gas in its body. Unfortunately Power makes the mistake of substituting cliché for denouement and aborts what might have been a good little story.

The Mallinson Case -- K. H. Hartley.

A solidograph communication is the device which figures prominently in a case of adultery and murder. The question, what is murder?, is reflected both in the case and in the court's judgment. Technical rather than dramatic.

Private Phone -- Rachel Cosgrove Payes.

A short, silly but maybe honest glimpse of that most excessive of humans, the teenager, and the lengths to which the young may use advanced technology to meet their special requirements. Okay of type.

 JUVENILE FICTION

Danny Dunn and the Smallifying Machine, by Jay Williams & Raymond Abrashkin
 (Washington Square Press, NY; Archway Paperback #29309; Feb. '71; 117 pp., ill.).

Danny Dunn and the Smallifying Machine was a story about a boy named Danny who, with his friends Joe and Irene, were trying to trail "spies" that they thought were spying on Professor Bullfinch's latest secret invention. They accidentally stumbled into the Professor's machine and were trapped. It was a strange trap, because in it Danny, Joe, Irene, and Professor Bullfinch (along with a dog) were only $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch high. Many strange creatures imperiled them. Danny even got to ride a butterfly! Using everything from a cigarette (about ten times as big as Danny) to cobwebs as thick as ropes, the four humans and the dog were saved in an unusual way.

This book was full of enjoyment and suspense. I enjoyed reading every page of it, although it was a bit too short. I recommend this for ages 8-13.

-- Stephen Miller (age 11)

A Wrinkle in Time, by Madeleine L'Engle (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, NY; Ariel Book; 26th Printing 1969 (Orig. printed 1962); 211 pp.; 1963 Newberry Award Winner).

On a dark and stormy night Meg Murray, her little brother Charles, and her mother were having a midnight snack in the kitchen when they were disturbed by a most unusual stranger. "Wild nights are my glory", the stranger said. "I just got caught in a downdraft and blown off course. Let me sit down for a moment and then I'll be on my way. Speaking of ways, by the way, there is such a thing as a tesseract." ### This book is the story of the adventures of Meg, Charles, and Calvin O'Keefe (a friend they had just met) in space and time. They are searching for Meg and Charles's father, a scientist who disappeared while doing secret work for the government on the tesseract problem (a tesseract is a wrinkle in time). ### This book is a Newberry Award winner. I thought that it should earn more than a medal. It was unusual, but not too much so. I liked it very much, and I think anyone that reads it will find it very enjoyable.

-- Sharon Miller (age 9)