

SPECTRUM

SPECTRUM/TWO January-February, 1963

Isaac Asimov THE HUGO WINNERS
Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE
Rosel George Brown A HANDFUL OF TIME
John Brunner THE DREAMING EARTH
Edgar Rice Burroughs THE MONSTER MEN
John W. Campbell, Jr. ANALOG 1
Terry Carr WARLORD OF KOR
Arthur C. Clarke TALES OF TEN WORLDS
Joe Lee Davis JAMES BRANCH CABELL
L. Sprague de Camp A GUN FOR DINOSAUR & LEST DARKNESS FALL
Ghislain de Diesbach THE TOYS OF PRINCES
Horace L. Gold BEYOND
H. Rider Haggard CLEOPATRA
Riley Hughes THE HILLS WERE LIARS
Russell Kirk THE SURLY SULLEN BELL
Kurtzman and Elder EXECUTIVE'S COMIC BOOK
Ward Moore and Avram Davidson JOYLEG
Andre Norton THE DEFIANT AGENTS
H. Beam Piper JUNKYARD PLANET
Frederik Pohl THE ABOMINABLE EARTHMAN AND SIX OTHER STORIES
Fletcher Pratt ALIEN PLANET
Sax Rohmer THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU
Robert Sheckley JOURNEY BEYOND TOMORROW
Clifford D. Simak THEY WALKED LIKE MEN
Cordwainer Smith YOU WILL NEVER BE THE SAME
Evelyn E. Smith THE PERFECT PLANET
Noel Streatfeild MAGIC AND THE MAGICIAN
Robert Lewis Taylor ADRIFT IN A BONEYARD
J. R. R. Tolkien THE ADVENTURES OF TOM BOMBADIL
Jack Vance THE DRAGON - MASTERS, and THE FIVE GOLD BANDS
"Vercors" SYLVA
H. G. Wells TWO NOVELS
Jack Williamson THE HUMANOIDS
plus
AN ADVANCE FORECAST OF CURRENT
AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS
and
Letters

Claude Saxon suggested, in his letter on the first issue, that we give a listing of what's coming out in the near future -- and also that we include the publisher's code number in our review of each paperback, for the convenience of small town and foreign fans who want to order through the mails. This sounded like a good idea, so we're doing both, starting with this issue. Thanks for the suggestions.

Our advance forecast (see pp 20-21) lists everything coming out from now through May. We may have missed a few, but I think it's fairly inclusive.

In SPECTRUM/THREE we plan to list everything published after February 28th, and review the 25 or 30 most important or interesting items, plus giving an advance forecast through July.

SPECTRUM/ONE, incidentally, was mailed out to fans and pros in thirty states, as well as Australia, France, Scotland, Canada, Northern Ireland, Germany, and Great Britain.

Thanks to Bantam, Regency Books, and the other publishers who have included SPECTRUM on their list for reviewer's copies.

I would appreciate it if any amateur groups who publish pamphlets or books from now on would either let us know of forthcoming publications, or send us a reviewer's copy. Such productions rarely get notice in publishers' trade magazines and it's hard to keep track of them.

SPECTRUM/THREE will be mailed the end of April. Among the books to be reviewed are Podkayne of Mars, Ferdinand Feghoot, Clark Ashton Smith's The Hill of Dionysus, and Arthur C. Clarke's Profiles of the Future. See you then.

Lin Carter

SPECTRUM/TWO, for January-February, 1963. Edited and Published by Lin Carter, Apartment 4-C, 2028 Davidson Avenue, New York City 53, N.Y. Associate Editor: Dave Van Arnam. Distributed free to all professional science fiction magazines, and to the science fiction editors of all paperback and hard-cover houses in the U.S. For everybody else, it's \$1.00 a year for six issues, unless you are one of the science fiction writers who get it free. Sorry, no trades. We're losing money as it is.

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM BOMBADIL

By J. R. R. Tolkien
George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962
64 pp., Illustrated,

As a rule, SPECTRUM does not review English books -- partly because it is hard to keep up with the new ones, and also because it is not easy for our readers to get them ... but mainly because there are so many new American books to review.

We're delighted, however, to make an exception in the case of this book. As the first book in seven years from the author of the finest fantasy of this century, it certainly commands our attention.

Professor Tolkien's new book consists of 16 poems drawn from the literature of Middle Earth, and a preface that is a sort of tongue-in-cheek parody of the solemn, scholarly type of literary archeology that is his profession. Some of the poems are of considerable length: the first in the book, called The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, is a charming, rollicking narrative poem of about 130 lines, concerning Tom's wooing and wedding of Goldberry, the River's Daughter. Another, Bombadil Goes Boating (about Tom's adventures in the Shire) runs to 160. There are also poems about Trolls, the Elves, and other inhabitants of Tolkien's magical, prehistoric world.

Virtually alone of the great fantasy novelists, Tolkien's verse stands comparison with his prose. Lovecraft, Cabell, Dunsany -- in fact almost all prose writers who chose to deal in magic -- produced inferior verse, despite the often high artistry of their prose styles. Only Tolkien (and to lesser degrees, Eddison and Clark Ashton Smith) wrote in both forms with equal craftsmanship.

Some of these verse display an extraordinary technical virtuosity, as for example the complex metrical devices, and elaborate handling of vowel music, in Errantry:

"There was a merry passenger,
a messenger, a mariner:
he built a gilded gondola
to wander in, and had in her
a load of yellow oranges
and prridge for his provender;
he perfumed her with marjoram
and cardamom and lavender."

Other poems draw from the ballad, or the nonsense-poem. Some of them are new versions of poems in The Lord of The Rings, but most of them are new.

It is a charming little book, excellently illustrated with two-color drawings by Pauline Baynes who illustrated the Narnia books, and with a gorgeous four-color wrap-around jacket. This book will be published in the United States this July, by Houghton Mifflin. It certainly whets my appetite for the long-delayed Silmarillion!

TALES OF TEN WORLDS

By Arthur C. Clarke
Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1962
245 pp., \$3.95.

Without any discernible effort, Arthur Clarke continues to retain his place year after year as one of the four or five finest science fiction writers still regularly practising the craft.

The secret of this probably lies in the simple fact that he is the master of a brilliant prose style. Not labored and purple, like Sturgeon and Bradbury, but limpid and clear, his prose conveys the mastery of a born writer, working at the top of his form.

His artistry is beautifully demonstrated in the 15 pieces that make up this collection. Emotion, description, plot and vision are displayed with superb restraint and control, in stories that are models of first-rate story-telling. I Remember Babylon, for example, with its memorable last paragraph. Death and the Senator, with its fine control of what would, in less able hands, have been a bravura piece of over-emotionalism.

The variety of styles displayed here demonstrate Clarke's wide range. From the typically-Campbellian problem-story of Summertime on Icarus, to the Jorkens/Gavagan's Bar type of Let There Be Light ... to Clarke's specialty, the poetic vision of a far, pastoral future, The Road to The Sea ... he remains the only writer around who can stand up to comparison with Heinlein.

-- L/C

THEY WALKED LIKE MEN

By Clifford D. Simak
Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1962
234 pp., \$3.95.

Simak's latest book is not up to his usual standard. In fact, it's not up to anyone's standard, including some of the poorer fanzines. Briefly, the plot is this: Earth is invaded secretly by aliens who look like black bowling balls (really!). Able to assume any form, they change into men and go around buying up houses and stores with loads of money. But it's not real money, you see, it's really the other bowling balls, I mean aliens, who have changed themselves into money (really!).

The hero, a newspaperman, is attacked by the aliens, or bowling balls, who change themselves into a bear trap planted in the doorway to the hero's apartment. This is one of the most baffling things in the book, by the way. There isn't any reason at all for them to attack the hero ... except to get him into the plot.

Anyway, it turns out the aliens, or bowling balls, are not just buying a few houses here and there, they are Buying Up The Whole Earth. Why? Well, they are galactic real estate agents. Really!

Then there's this good alien. He's not a bowling ball, he's a dog. I don't mean that he makes himself look like a dog -- he really does look like a dog. This turns out to be pure coincidence. After appearing to the hero (for no discernible reason) he vanishes and turns up at the White House, where he sits on the lawn, telling everyone he wants to speak to the President. Don't get him wrong -- he's not just a talking dog. He represents sort of a galactic Better Business Bureau. Really!

That's about all there is to the plot, aside from a few newspaper people, a goody-goody heroine, a homeless executive or two, and a jolly old Skunk-Farmer (who saves the world from the bowling balls, by the way).

Mr. Simak, really -- !

-- Joe Schaumburger

A GUN FOR DINOSAUR

By L. Sprague de Camp

Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1963

359 pp., \$4.50.

This is the second de Camp book we've reviewed in two issues, and the third is back among the reprints. The prolific L. Sprague has given us a hefty, meaty collection of 14 stories, some of novelet-length, just about covering the gamut of sf -- from time travel, gadget stories and interplanetary adventure, all the way to wacky Unknownish humor (Cornzan the Mighty) and a typical de Campian historical piece (Aristotle and the Gun).

It's good clean fun all the way. These stories appeared originally in nine different magazines from 1949 to 1957, and many will be new and unfamiliar to the reader.

As always, de Camp displays a deft and light-hearted touch in plot and characterization, combined with authoritative technical detail in the background ... a blend that rarely fails to soothe and tickle my palate, and, I expect, yours.

Best in book? I'd say Judgement Day (from ASF, 1955), a deep and savage character-study of the scientist who can, if he wishes, release a formula that will lead to the destruction of the world. His decision comes from his childhood, when childish cruelty and inhumanity formed (warped, rather) his character. In its acid-etched bitterness and psychological realism it is unlike the usual de Camp, and very moving.

-- L/C

ALIEN PLANET

By Fletcher Pratt

Avalon Books, New York, 1962

224 pp., \$2.95.

Gernsback published this first in 1932 -- need I say more? Alvin Schierstedt travels to the planet Murashema with Ashembe, whose "cometary car" crashed near his Adirondack lodge. What plot there is, and there isn't much, is arranged so that Ashembe may comment on Earth's culture from the viewpoint of his Utopian civilization. Thank God Pratt's literary reputation doesn't rest on this sort of thing. Amusing as a sort of museum-piece only.

-- L/C

MAGIC AND THE MAGICIAN

By Noel Streatfeild
Abelard-Schuman, Ltd., New York, 1962
160 pp., Illustrated, \$3.95.

It was Tony Boucher who got me started on E. Nesbit. In one of his reviews in F&SF he made glowing references to her Wet Magic. It teased my imagination to the point that I hunted down the book, read it, and have been reading her work ever since.

Although I've read about half of her 30-or-more children's fantasies, I knew next to nothing about E. Nesbit's life until this admirable biographical study came along. Miss Streatfeild not only delves into E. Nesbit's life (1858-1924) but also tries to discover what in her life lent such persuasive magic to her books.

It's a charming and entertaining critique of her wonderful children's books as well as a biography -- covering the fantasies and the realistic stories both. It peers deeply into her characters -- the Bastables, the Five Children, and the Railway Children -- and her durable magical creations, the Psammead, the Phoenix, and the Mouldiwarp. It is filled with many interesting insights into Edith Nesbit as a person: her lifelong friendship with Sir E. A. Wallis Budge (who helped her with her magical lore, and to whom The Story of The Amulet is dedicated); her efforts for Socialism (as one of the original members of The Fabian Society); and her contact with such people as H. G. Wells (who disliked her, thinking her Socialism an intellectual affectation) and Noel Coward (who adored her, and who read each of her books twenty times); as well as her now little-known adult books and poetry.

E. Nesbit is one of the most talented writers ever to specialize in children's books, and her influence is still to be felt in such writers of today as Edward Eager. If you have ever read Five Children and It or The Book of Dragons or The Magic World, and wish to know how these marvelous fantasies came to be written, this book will be enormously interesting and revelatory.

-- L/C

WARLORD OF KOR

By Terry Carr
Ace Books #F-173, New York, 1963
97 pp., 40¢.

This is Terry Carr's first science fiction novel (actually weighing in, at about 33,000 words, as a novelet). I reviewed it in advance in Yandro last year from the manuscript, and a fast perusal reveals no cuts or changes.

The basic plot is deliberately Leigh Brackettish: archeologists explore an alien planet, aided by the last surviving remnants of the native inhabitants, who pass their history down through millennia by telepathic sharing of racial memory. Lee Rynason's task is to discover why the Hirlaji culture suddenly changed from an aggressive, expanding civilization into a peaceful, stagnating civilization which eventually left the planet in ruins.

Another, and superior, civilization is hinted at, and while the hero wrestles with the problems of communicating with the Hirlaji survivors, his boss is manipulating race-hate in the locals, hoping to exterminate the Hirlaji and advance himself to political power. The final scenes take place in the ruins of an ancient temple where the pseudo-God, Kor, unlocks the final secret to the mystery of the Hirlaji -- just as the earthmen attack.

The atmosphere is excellent; a palpable mustiness escapes the pages in which the ancient ruins are explored. Characterization and plot, while cut from the standard bolt of cloth, are well handled. Unfortunately, Terry's science is excruciatingly bad: his psionic machines are simply pulled (sans explanation) from a convenient hat. His finale, where Ryanson speaks through the machine, Kor, is flatly unbelievable. Still, these are minor points, and the book stands up well in spite of them.

The reverse, Robert Moore William's The Star Wasps, was unreadable.

-- Ted White

JOYLEG

By Ward Moore & Avram Davidson
Pyramid Books # F-805, New York, 1963
160 pp., 40¢.

A vigilant Congressional committee discovers that a veteran of the American Revolution is getting a G.I. pension of eleven dollars a month .. and has been getting it for two hundred years! Is some unprincipled dog trying to gyp the United States of America?

Congressman Tully Weathernox and Congresswoman Lucinda Habersham set out for Rabbit Notch, Tennessee, to track down the mysterious vet, Isachar Z. Joyleg. The old gent turns out to be, a) not a fake but a genuine Early American, with scads of documents to prove it (including a land grant to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and one to Atomgrad, Siberia, signed by George Washington and the Empress Catherine the Great, respectively), and b) no doddering grandsire, but a sprightly codger with a wicked eye for the ladies.

All hell breaks loose, with TV, reporters, Russians, FBI agents, and the good old U.S. Congress getting into the act. Does Joyleg own Oak Ridge and Atomgrad? Will he take up Khrushchev's offer to become a Russian citizen? Does the secret of immortality really lie in taking a bath in home-brewed whiskey?

Combining Ward Moore's specialist's knowledge of the minutae of early American history with Avram Davidson's faultless ear for dialogue and sense of the ridiculous, this novel is a thoroughly entertaining bit of not-too-subtle satire. A good solid book, with lots to say -- and it says it very well, indeed. I'd like to see these two, both of whom write too seldom, collaborate at least once a year, if they can continue turning out books as charming as this one!

-- L/C

BEYOND

Edited by H. L. Gold
Berkley Books # F-712, New York, 1963
160 pp., 50¢.

Beyond was a pretty good magazine during its brief existence a decade ago, and quasi-reincarnation in this anthology of ten stories from its pages, should be a cause for a small bitter-sweet celebration.

But such is not the case. This book might well have been titled "The Worst from Beyond." As it is, the front-cover superscript commits one outright lie, one inaccurate value-judgement, as well as one syntactical horror, in calling it "The distilled essence of the best from the pages of one of America's greatest science fiction magazines."

Of the "ten stories" here, five of them (Bradbury, Pohl, Bixby, and two Fred Brown vignettes) are not stories at all, but jokes. Pohl's thing, for instance, is about a fellow who can raise ghosts. He raises a dinosaur ghost to scare a chap he has a grudge against, then by accident raises his own ghost and has to contend with the ectoplasmiphageous dino. Ha ha.

Brown tells about a college student who is flunking geometry and summons a daemon to help him out. But he's so bad at geometry that he draws a hexagram instead of a restraining pentagram, and gets done horrible fings to. Ho ho.

The Bixby piece is a deal-with-the-devil exercise also, as well as a time-paradox game, as well as being a joke ... some sort of a record for varieties of non-story crammed into one piece. The Winston Marks piece is also an exercise in deal-with-the-devil. Hee hee.

One each by James Gunn and Wyman Guinn are pleasant little nothings. The Gunn is about a brewer whose beer has a head on it -- a human head. Hoo hoo. The Sturgeon contribution is little more than a vignette, about a Nasty Little Boy who fwows mud on a Nice Little Girl, then turns himself into a bug and gets stepped on. And the Algis Budrys piece -- 54 pages long -- shows considerable talent and insight and at least one good solid character -- but its virtues would be much more obvious if Heinlein had not written They in 1941.

Ha ha. Hee hee. Ho hum.

-- Dick Lupoff

THE DRAGON MASTERS & FIVE GOLD BANDS

By Jack Vance
Ace Books # F-185, New York, 1963
102 & 122 pp., 40¢.

The Dragon Masters is an absolutely first rate novella from Galaxy, written with Vance's enormously inventive imagination and narrative powers and displaying a brilliant insight into alien psychology (on pages 15 to 17). The Five Gold Bands is a juicy old chunk of space opera from Startling Stories in 1950. Jack Vance is, and has been for some years, one of the ablest practitioners of science fiction still in the field. Read this book.

-- L/C

ANALOG I

John W. Campbell, Jr. (Ed.)
Doubleday & Company, New York, 1963
219 pp., \$3.95.

In his introduction, JWC warns the reader that SF is fun just like mountain-climbing: you can only appreciate it if you make a considerable effort. He then goes on to prove his thesis by as dreary a crop of stories as have been collected in ten years.

The lead novelet, Monument, by Lloyd Biggle, Jr., is a prime example. Good Earthman A lands on planet, educates natives, dies. Good Earthman B comes along and so does Bad Earthman C, who starts building a giant resort hotel right smack on the site of the natives' sacred village. Good Earthman B and the natives object, but it does no good. So the natives come up with a plan and when the hotel is built, the natives slap a huge tax on the property and take it over. Groan.

The Plague, by Teddy Keller, is a story about germ warfare, and of the sort Startling Stories used to use for a filler. And Remember The Alamo, by T.R. Fehrenbach (who are all of these nobody authors? Gordon R. Dickson is the only well-known writer in the collection), is a surprise-ending time travel yarn which, sadly, telegraphs the punchline from paragraph one.

All in all, a mediocre collection. The stories are not stories but puzzles. Characterization is completely lacking; plot almost non-existent; and the SF element mostly window-decoration. I wish I could say this collection is not of typical Analog quality, but unfortunately it is.

-- Joe Schaumburger

THE SURLY SULLEN BELL

By Russell Kirk
Fleet Publishing Corp., New York, 1962
240 pp., \$4.50.

If you read Old House of Fear (Fleet, N.Y., 1961) you know that Russell Kirk is a talented man, original in concept and skillful in creating and sustaining mood.

This first collection of his stories offers further proof over a broader canvas. There are ten sketches here, some downright supernatural (Uncle Isaiah), some just unsettling (Behind the Stumps), all scary and well-told. There is also a brief but pointed note on supernatural fiction, that doesn't have too much to say, but says it succinctly.

The collection is well illustrated with woodcut-like plates, but kind of overpriced for a collection of this size. Well worth reading, though, and doubtless destined for paperback reprint. Best in book: the title story (from Shakespeare's sonnet, LXXXI), a beautifully-fashioned piece of quiet, mounting horror.

-- L/C

THE ABOMINABLE EARTHMAN

By Frederik Pohl

Ballantine Books #F-685, New York, 1963

159 pp., 50¢.

Two short stories, a novelet, a novella, and a mock-article, all from Galaxy; plus a short story each from If and Playboy; nothing earlier than 1959.

We Never Mention Aunt Nora is a clinker. A Life and a Half isn't much better. The rest are excellent, however. Damn good entertainment. Including The Martian Star-Gazers, that slightly-too-long hilarity from the Feb 62 Galaxy (under the byline of "Ernst Mason," which apparently makes Pohl the author of the well-done biography Tiberius, Ballantine, 1960). Remember it? With woefully inaccurate Gaughan cover and illos, it purported to give the astronomical reasons behind the mass suicide of the Martians some centuries back.

Punch is great wish-fulfillment, and packs a real. As for the short, Three Portraits and a Prayer, the title novelet, The Abominable Earthman, and the novella, Whatever Counts ... welllll, they are seasoned, intricate, eminently satisfying pieces. The sort that is just rare enough to give them perhaps a higher value than they really are worth ... sort of Heinlein without the final two layers.

120 good pages out of 159 makes this a worthwhile buy even if you are (as I am beginning to) rationing your sf a bit these days. But, on the other hand, who needs to be pressured into buying Pohl on sight any more?

-- Dave Van Arnam

YOU WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

By Cordwainer Smith

Regency Books #RG 309, Evanston (Ill.), 1963

156 pp., 50¢.

"Cordwainer Smith" -- it can't be for real! -- is rapidly emerging as a writer of considerable weight and merit. This is his first book, a collection of eight stories from six magazines, dating from 1955 to 1961.

Present is the savage Scanners Live in Vain, the richly human No, No, Not Rogov!, and a series of very-far-future tales which display his enormous inventive fertility .. stories like The Lady Who Sailed the Soul (remember Helen America and Captain Grey-no-more?) and Alpha Ralpa Boulevard. Each yarn bears the impress of a very original creative talent, and the collection as a whole has an extremely high water-mark of excellence.

With Brian Aldiss, Gordon Dickson, and Philip K. Dick (and, just possibly, John Brunner), Cordwainer Smith may very well be one of the shapers of science fiction in the Sixties.

-- L/C

JAMES BRANCH CABELL

By Joe Lee Davis
Twayne Publishers, Inc., New York, 1962
166 pp., \$3.50.

Ahem.

Announcing the first serious full-length hardcover book on one of the greatest fantasy writers and prose stylists of all time. Those who already love Cabell's writing will get a great deal out of this study of it; they will, unfortunately, have to wade through some muddy bits of turgid professorial glop, but that's par for the course in any such series on "great American writers" such as this one of Twayne's. Each book has to sound as if it's written about Faulkner. Murky. Long paragraphs. But if you like Cabell... Those who do not like Cabell ... hmmm. Well, I might ask if they have read anything other than Jurgen. Everybody has read or has heard of Jurgen. (Apropos of the great Jurgen censorship trial, I might note here that Cabell's first novel, The Eagle's Shadow, was serialized in The Saturday Evening Post in 1904, and was the occasion for the premiere introduction of the word "damn" among those sanctified pages.) Those who don't like Cabell usually tried the only book by him they ever heard of, and didn't like it. I'm not extraordinarily fond of it myself, as it happens, and feel it incumbent upon me to point out that, after all, Cabell did write some 50 books other than Jurgen.

Cabell's prose is rich and varied; but it is not the richness of Dunsany or Eddison. It presents a warm and carefully-worked tapestry of the intellect; difficult at times, intricate, awesomely complex, it fits the stories Cabell tells. Perhaps if I were to recommend a Cabell-hater (or in fact a Cabell-novice, of whom I suppose there must be a large number, unfortunately) some new way of coming at Cabell, I would, instead of recommending such fantasy masterpieces as The High Place, The Cream of the Jest, and Figures of Earth, point out that Cabell was a supremely capable short-story writer -- something largely ignored by his critics and his friends alike. There are 50 of these brilliant and forgotten gems in the 18-volume Storisende Edition (his collected works up to 1930), and quite possibly they will, in that dim future in which Cabell will again be recognized as one of the immortals, be recognized for what they are -- far better than all but the best two or three of his novels.

His short stories are richer in background even than his novels; they are colorfully intricate gems, and usually have a viciously clever and satisfying twist at the end. A cross between John Collier and Clark Ashton Smith; an overlay of Robert Louis Stevenson; and dashes of The Dying Earth, Finnegans Wake, the Borgia stories of Sabatini, Corvo, and Derleth; mingled with total romanticism and realistic wit; ... and, as I may have said before, the finest prose style ever created. (See my 700-page article in my forthcoming fanzine, ENDLESS.)

Anyway, Mr. Davis's book is Vol. 21 of Twayne's United States Authors Series, and is also available in a paperback edition for, I believe, \$1.75. It's unquestionably the most important book in the series.

-- Dave Van Arnam

JUNKYARD PLANET

By H. Beam Piper
G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1963
224 pp., \$3.75.

Here is a meaty, solid, fully satisfying and carefully done science fiction novel -- ostensibly marketed as a Heinlein-type juvenile, and enjoyable as such -- but, a la *The Master's* juveniles, really adult fare behind the trimmings.

In the Interstellar Age, a war between the System States Alliance and the Terran Federation has concluded some years before the story opens, leaving the planet of Poictesme (Cabell fans -- attention!) a giant, abandoned supply-dump whose inhabitants eke out a meagre existence as scavengers on a planetary scale.

Get the picture? A supply depot of planetary size, littered with the military equipment left behind when the Third Fleet Army Force withdrew. The folks on Poictesme are slumping back into a rural existence, having lost the moxie needed for progress during the long occupation. Now they spend their lives picking over the supergigantic rubbish heap, trading a little salvage here and there but sliding rapidly back into backwater levels. Only the mythical supercomputer Merlin -- an electronic brain of incalculable value, hidden somewhere on the planet -- keeps them going. The man, or men, who find it will be wealthy.

So they send young Conn Maxwell to Terra, training as a computer expert there, and also digging around amidst military archives trying to find a clue to the hiding place of the computer. He returns home -- landing at Lichfield (again, Cabell fans!), with the sad news that the legendary computer is exactly that -- a legend, invented for propaganda reasons during the late war.

His people, though, simply refuse to believe him. Merlin has become a symbol to them, an El Dorado, a Grail, a numinous thing which, when found, will solve all their problems and get the planet back on its feet. Rather than disappoint them, he goes along with the pretence that the Merlin does in fact exist -- and the wild goose chase they then embark on is the meat of the story...

And a good story it is. Here is a science fiction novel you can really get your teeth into! On the surface, a good fast-moving adventure story, it has allegorical levels with a moral (say, something like "searching even for something that's not there often turns up something of equal value"). It also has a nice layer of hidden meanings for those who have read Jurgen, The Cream of the Jest, The High Place, and other volumes in the "Biography of Manuel."

This is first-class science fiction. I recommend it without reservations. It is, in fact, the best SF novel reviewed in these pages, and may be a contender for the best of the year.

THE HUGO WINNERS

Edited by Isaac Asimov

Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1962

xvi + 318 pp., \$3.95.

Once upon a time there was a young fellow named Hal Lynch, who, doubtless inspired by the annual Oscar orgies on TV, suggested to his co-committeemen of the 11th World Science Fiction Convention (Philadelphia, 1953) that the science fiction world should have such an award.

Thus the "Hugo" was born. It was inaugurated at Philadelphia that year, and has continued as an annual feature of the world cons thereafter (with the exception of the 12th Convention). The usual line-up of awards are Best Novel, Novelette, Short Story, Illustrator, Magazine, of the year.

Sooner or later it was bound to occur to somebody to put the prizewinning shorts and novelettes together in an anthology ... and, in the fulness of time, it seems, it did so occur to Mr. Timothy Seldes of Doubleday to do so, with the very able assistance of Ike Asimov.

Such a collection would have to be an outstanding one, and it is indeed. The line-up of stories (nine in all) covers some of the very finest short science fiction of the decade, namely: The Darfsteller (Walter M. Miller, Jr., Cleveland); Allamagoosa (Eric Frank Russell, Cleveland); Exploration Team (Murray Leinster, New York); The Star (Arthur C. Clarke, New York); Or All the Seas with Oysters (Col. Avram Davidson, Los Angeles); The Big Front Yard (Cliff Simak, Detroit); The Hell-Bound Train (Bloch, Detroit); Flowers for Algernon (Daniel Keyes, Pittsburgh); and The Longest Voyage (Poul Anderson, Seattle); plus a delightful, witty introduction and an afterword by Asimov, concluding with a list of all the Hugo-winners in all categories, for all cons up, through, and including that of 1961.

It is a fine, distinguished collection. Most of the stories have been reprinted after winning their prize (Davidson's as the title piece in his 1962 Berkley collection, Bloch's in his Belmont More Nightmares of the same year, Simak's in the Simon & Schuster Worlds of Clifford Simak, Clarke's in The Other Side of the Sky, and so on).

Almost all of the stories are good stuff. Leinster's item is one of the very best stories I have ever read by him. Poul Anderson's contribution is a very clever one: a marooned spaceman on a pre-industrial world whose culture is rather like Elizabethan England, with a background worked out in astounding detail for a story of its length.

It's a truly superior anthology. In point of fact, it's the very best sf anthology I've seen from anyone in about five years. I hope we can expect another such volume from Doubleday, say about 1973. Tim Seldes, please take note ...

EXECUTIVES' COMIC BOOK

By Harvey Kurtzman and Will Elder
Macfadden Books #50-159, New York, 1962
159 pp., 50¢.

Subtitled "The Adventures of Goodman Beaver" this is a collection of four Beaver episodes from Help! magazine, reproduced a panel to a page and (for once) as well printed as the original versions. Written by Kurtzman, drawn by Elder, Goodman Beaver is inspired variously by Voltaire's Candide (the idealist-boob in the book of the same name) and Little Orphan Annie, whose blunked-out eyes and blunked-out homilies Goodman emulates.

Goodman (who first appeared as one of the characters in a story in Kurtzman's Jungle Book, Ballantine, 1959) wanders thru four strange worlds of contemporary comment and satire -- "Goodman Meets S*PERM*N," "T*RZ*N" (which milk the last gags available from these two overworked subjects), plus "Goodman Underwater" (in which Beaver meets a modern skin-diving Don Quixote, and the gem of the book, "Goodman Goes Playboy." Perhaps embittered by the failure of the Heffner-published Trump, and certainly appalled by the Playboy Syndrome itself, he has honed his pen into a razor-sharp needle which he proceeds to jab into every aspect of the Playboy Culture (also taking swipes at "Archie," which he did previously in Mad, drawing a complaint from the publishers of Archie Comics at the time).

If you've read these in Help! you may not see much point in getting the book (and, with the distribution it seems to have enjoyed, in the New York area, you may never see the book, period), but I recommended it as a more permanent repository of some damn good current-day Kurtzmania...

-- Ted White

THE DREAMING EARTH

By John Brunner
Pyramid Books #F-829, New York, 1963
159 pp., 40¢.

Newcomer John Brunner is rapidly emerging into the front ranks. About two more books the equal of this one will get him there.

In the early XXI Century, America is staggering through a bad Depression, plagued with unemployment, general lack of morale and the ennui that attends the last days of any highly-evolved civilization when the inner mechanism gets out of whack. The U.N. is blamed for all the country's troubles, which greatly complicates U.N. agent Nick Greville's job -- breaking the "happy dreams" drug chain.

The population explosion, the concurrent Depression, and the widespread use of this mysterious drug are rapidly destroying the country. How is the drug distributed in such enormous quantities? Why is the price always stable? Is it true that addicts completely vanish into thin air after a time?

A well thought-out and nicely written novel with some real meat on its bones -- with a climax revelation that comes out of nowhere. Watch this author!

-- L/C

THE TOYS OF PRINCES

By Ghislain de Diesbach (Richard Howard translation)
Pantheon Books, New York, 1963
190 pp., \$3.50.

Here's a literary curiosity of considerable interest: a weird and Graustarkian collection of short stories by a French aristocrat descended from ancient Merovingian nobility, previously unknown in this country.

They are not so much stories as anecdotes of the grotesque and decadent eccentricities of glittering Never-Never-Land court nobility of two centuries ago ... bizarre and elaborate fables such as the tale of the melancholy prince and princess, each bored with the other and each desperately and morbidly keeping alive the memory of their first lovers. They hire a clever German clockmaker to construct lifelike automatons in the likenesses of their long dead lovers ... and nine months later, commission him to fashion a tiny clockwork Heir Apparent.

Erotic, ironic, fantastic, these dream-like chronicles of a vanished era are not for all tastes, but offer a rare bouquet to the reader fond of Cabell, Erskine, and Lafcadio Hearn.

-- L/C

JOURNEY BEYOND TOMORROW

By Robert Sheckley
Signet Books #D2223, New York, 1962
144 pp., 50¢.

I was convinced, when I read the cut version in F&SF (The Journey of Joenes, Oct-Nov 62), that this would stir up a great deal of controversy. However, I have yet to hear of any.

The story is well-framed. Certain south-sea island historians have gathered together scraps of information about the cataclysmic end of modern times, a thousand years in their past. This produces such slapstick references as "General Patton's victory against the Persians in '45," as a constant background chatter to delight the reader (if he is delighted by such things, and I am). The book is a deadpan parody of the traditional Voltairean satirical novel, crammed with hilarious takeoffs on beatniks, pidgeon-English, and, of course, congressional committees, the military, the cold war, the...

The political element of satire here is generally of the Frothing Liberal type, and those who have been in the thick of defending Heinlein recently should be up in arms. For Sheckley really lays it on a bit thick. He is obviously still ill-at-ease in the novel form, solving the problem to a certain extent in this case by telling a dozen vignettes in various personae -- and does so brilliantly -- but has not gotten control. Consequently the rather tasteless excesses.

But it's eminently readable. Sturgeon calls it a masterpiece; perhaps I could go so far as to say it's eminently re-readable.

-- Dave Van Arnam

THE HILLS WERE LIARS

By Riley Hughes
All Saints Press #AS-230, New York, 1962
216 pp., 50¢.

This is an off-beat entry from a publisher of religious novels ... but don't let that throw you, it's pretty good stuff. An after-the-Bomb story with a few new twists.

Several decades after the Final War, things have gone to pot. In fact, things are so bad that Kevin, the hero, finds his Bible more believable than the only other surviving book -- a battered American history text, which seems like a fantasy novel.

Kevin and seven other men appear to be the last human beings left in the world, so they elect one of their number as Pope, and ... but I can't say anything more without giving away too much of the plot.

There are some very good touches here. Christianity has gone underground, returning to its ancient name -- "The Company of the Fish." Stalin's bust turns up in a ruined museum, labeled "First World President." This is actually an entertaining, well-written book, vaguely reminiscent of A Canticle for Leibowitz. And it has an ending that I believe is completely unique in science fiction -- an absolutely new twist to the good old boy-gets-girl theme. Recommended.

-- Joe Schaumburger

THE DEFIANT AGENTS

By Andre Norton
Ace Books #F-183, New York, 1963
192 pp., 40¢.

I've never been able to make up my mind about Andre Norton. Sky Miller admires her work -- Jim Blish dislikes it strongly. I sort of mugwump it, i.e., I admire her narrative pace and fertility of invention, but feel she writes sloppily, hastily, carelessly. Whenever I read something of hers, I have the feeling that with just a little more hard work and discipline, this could have been a very good book.

So with The Defiant Agents. A band of modern Apaches are sent to the planet Topaz as settlers -- the idea being that, being used to scraping a living from the wilderness, such rugged savages are ideal to tame a wild planet. Especially if they have been artificially retuned to the mentality of a pre-conquest Apache ancestor. Trouble starts when Travis Fox, the central character, discovers the Communists also had the same idea, and tried it, too ... with a band of Genghis Khan's Mongols. The basic premise is pretty far-fetched, but if you can accept it, the novel is colorful and fast-moving enough. But when is Andre Norton going to buckle down and sweat out the major work she is potentially capable of doing?

-- L/C

A HANDFULL OF TIME

By Rosel George Brown
Ballantine Books #F 703, New York, 1963
160 pp., 60¢.

Here's a first collection by a new writer. These twelve stories -- mostly from F&SF -- are slick, witty, clever. They are almost all about women and, outside of an occasional more or less traditional time-travel yarn, present the sort of "suburban science fiction" that Margaret St. Clair used to write.

I hasten to add that they are not anywhere near the level of crudeness that Miss St. Clair achieved with some difficulty, back in the Oona & Jick days. But that there is a relentless femininity about their outlook -- Lost in Translation is about a college professor's spinster daughter who, infatuated with a graduate student, agrees (despite her neovictorian prudery) to partake in a time-travel experiment .. losing, in translation, her virginity. A Little Human Contact concerns a suburban housewife's husband troubles. Just a Suggestion is about gardening. Visiting Professor is about the troubles a college professor's wife has with visiting people from the future. Car Pool is about a housewife's trouble with displaced aliens.

... Come to think of it, the Oona & Jick stories weren't half bad.

-- L/C

THE PERFECT PLANET

By Evelyn E. Smith
Avalon Books, New York, 1962
224 pp., \$2.95.

Here's another female, but this one has something on the ball. You've read Evelyn E. (no relation) Smith before, but this seems to be her debut in hardcovers. A long delayed debut, I might add, for she is a witty and intelligent young lady with a not inconsiderable talent.

This is a sort of Pohl-and-Kornbluth job, i.e., another entry in the "What would happen if advertising agencies took over? What would happen if insurance companies took over? What would happen if the Glotz-Hammermeyer Shoe Company of Armpit, Idaho, took over?" sweepstakes. It concerns a planet, Artemis by name, inhabited only by sunbathing-and-health faddists.

Miss Smith works it out from that starting point with merciless logic. Calories, on Artemis, are regarded with the same degree of loathing we reserve for the tsetse fly. Eating a cream-puff on Artemis is more dangerous than selling a copy of Little Black Sambo on the streets of Little Rock, Arkansas. And when an overweight pair of terrestrials with a king-sized sweet-tooth rediscover Artemis and land .. well, maybe you can imagine.

It's lightweight stuff (no pun intended), and played for laughs. But good entertainment all the way. Miss Smith spins a mean novel, and I will be looking for her next one.

-- L/C

NEW REPRINTS

CLEOPATRA, by H. Rider Haggard; Pocket Books, Inc. # 7025, New York, 1963. xiv + 290 pp., 50¢.

This is the first time Haggard's durable and voluptuous romance about the Serpent of the Nile and Prince Harmarchis has appeared in paperback. It is one of the best Egyptian romances ever written, colorful, luxurious, seething with feasts and orgies, the Mysteries of Isis, magical rites, and similar goodies. Complete and unabridged too.

-- L/C

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, by H.G. Wells; Ballantine Books #F687, New York, 1963. 160 pp., 50¢.

We are in the middle of a mild little Wells revival: eight or nine of his classic scientific romances are available in inexpensive PB editions. This one is, of course, one of the earliest stories of space travel ever done, and still pretty readable in a quaint old fashioned way. The Selenites, Cavorite the anti-gravity metal... it kind of takes you back!

-- L/C

THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, by Sax Rohmer; Pyramid Books # F-804, New York, 1962. 192 pp., 40¢.

Don't let 'em fool you, the boys at Pyramid are NOT bringing out the thirteen Fu Manchu books in order. They did the first three in order okay, but skipped No. 4 (Daughter). Drums, which is the sixth they have re-issued, is actually the ninth book in the series, since they (for some reason which escapes me) passed over Trail and President. Ah well, perhaps it doesn't matter in which order you read them, and juicy little morsels of Victorian corn they are!

-- L/C

THE HUMANOIDS, by Jack Williamson; Lancer Science Fiction Library # 74-812, New York, 1963. 178 pp., 75¢.

This is the first paperback edition of what has always seemed to me one of the eighteen or twenty best sf novels of the past dozen years. Serialized in ASF in 1948-49, hardcovered by Grosset and Dunlap in 1950, it is a suspenseful, gripping chase-story in the Thirty-Nine Steps school. The Old Master's absolute best.

-- L/C

LEST DARKNESS FALL, by L. Sprague de Camp; Pyramid Books # F-817, New York, 1963. 174 pp., 40¢.

Here's one of the best fantasies Unknown ever published, the tale of a XX Century archeologist tossed back through time to the early days of Justinian. In typical de Camp fashion, he sets out doggedly to keep the Empire from collapsing by inventing a printing press and like that. Jolly hi-jinks and erudite entertainment ... and the title-page drawing is by Cartier. Get it.

-- L/C

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, by Philip Wylie and Edwin Balmer; Paperback Library #52-180, New York, 1962. 192 pp., 50¢.

Remember this one -- Bronson Alpha and Bronson Beta, and all that? Vintage of 1932, and has lost a good deal of its flavor. I never liked it much, even back then, and it hasn't improved. Slow and dull, cumbersome and cluttered ... one of Wylie's worst and, despite the cover blurb, definitely not in the same league with Brave New World or 1984. I can't recommend this one.

-- L/C

THE MONSTER MEN, by Edgar Rice Burroughs; Ace Books # F-182, New York, 1963. 159 pp., 40¢.

This is one of ERB's rarest, a romp through the jungles of Borneo with a latter-day Frankenstein, pirates and headhunters. Time was, and not too long ago either, we were paying eight smackers for a second-hand copy -- now it's on every dadblamed newstand for only 40¢! Ah well. And there's a weirdy of a Frazetta cover, too, and a jolly introduction by one Richard Lupoff. What kicks!

-- L/C

THE INVISIBLE MAN, by H.G. Wells; Chariot Classics # CB-128, (New York?), 1963. 195 pp., 50¢.

I never saw this imprint before, and there's no poop in my copy as to address or anything. Anyway, this is one of Wells' very best. The man who invents a means of turning hisse'f invisible to the nekkid eyeball and then can't get rid of it .. what a lovely plot, and neither story nor style has aged a bit. You see what it is, Mr. Balmer and Mr. Wylie, all it takes is good, real good, writing.

-- L/C

ADRIFT IN A BONEYARD, by Robert Lewis Taylor; Avon Books #G-1132, New York, 1963. 191 pp., 50¢.

This is the first paperbacking of Mr. Taylor's 1947 Doubleday novel, apparently released to capitalize on his sudden rise as author of the Pulitzer Prizewinner, A Journey to Matecumbe. It's an after-the-Bomb story (with a world-wide thunderstorm instead of a bomb), written with a powerful flavor of hearty if macabre humor rather like Houseboat on the Styx, or Jerome K. Jerome's Three Men in a Boat (to say Nothing of the Dog). Briefly, one family survives a mysterious cataclysm and sets up housekeeping in a deserted world ... but don't make the mistake of thinking it's anything like any other book you've read with a similar theme, because it isn't. It's fresh, original, charming -- and funny as hell.

-- L/C

SYLVA, by Vercors (pseud. Jean Bruller); Crest Books #d586, Greenwich (Conn.), 1963. 175 pp., 50¢.

What would you do if a fox, fleeing from the hunt, turned into a gorgeous naked girl in your arms? Well, if you do what Vercors' Albert Richwick did, you'll have one hell of a problem on your hadns ... i.e., a gorgeously-naked girl, yes, but also one with the brains of a fox, and the morals. She doesn't bathe, she can't talk -- she's not even house-broken! A cute yarn, sexy as all get out.

-- L/C

FORTHCOMING

Here's a listing of the new and forthcoming books scheduled to appear in the next few months, for the benefit of those who would like to know in advance what is coming up next. This forecast covers both hard-cover and paperback publications. Release dates are, of course, subject to change without notice.

February 1

Edgar Rice Burroughs: THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT (and) THE MOON MAID; Dover

Sam Moskowitz (Ed.): THE COMING OF THE ROBOTS; Collier

March 1

Edgar Rice Burroughs: A PRINCESS OF MARS (and) A FIGHTING MAN OF MARS; Dover

Edgar Rice Burroughs: TWO NOVELS OF VENUS; Dover

February 4

Yates Wilson: MORE ALICE (sequel to "Alice in Wonderland"); Roy

March 4

C.S. Lewis: THE GREAT DIVORCE; Macmillan

February 15

Edgar Rice Burroughs: THREE NOVELS OF PELLUCIDAR; Dover

March 11

Fredric Brown: THE SHAGGY DOG AND OTHER STORIES; Dutton

February 18

Ray Bradbury: THE ANTHEM SPRINGERS; Dial

March 12

Isaac Asimov: THE STARS LIKE DUST; Lancer

February 20

Robert Bloch: HORROR-7; Belmont

March 14

Robert Bloch: BOGEY MEN; Pyramid

Feb. Release Date

John Erskine: ADAM AND EVE; Charter

March 15

G.K. Chesterton: THE CLUB OF QUEER TRADES; Dufour

Jack London: THE STAR ROVER; Macmillan

L. Sprague de Camp: THE HAND OF ZEI; Avalon

Sam Moskowitz (Ed): EXPLORING OTHER WORLDS; Collier

March 20

M. Murray: THE WITCH-CULT IN WESTERN EUROPE; Oxford

Frank Belknap Long: IT WAS THE DAY OF THE ROBOT; Belmont

Dorothy Sayers (Ed): HUMAN AND IN-HUMAN STORIES; Macfadden (?)

March 22

M.P. Shiel: LORD OF THE SEA; Xanadu

Sam Moskowitz: EXPLORERS OF THE INFINITE, SHAPERS OF SCIENCE FICTION; World

March 27

Arthur C. Clarke: CHILDHOOD'S
END (new hardcover edition);
Harcourt

March Release Date

Leigh Brackett: ALPHA CENTAURI
OR DIE; Ace

Edgar Rice Burroughs: A FIGHTING
MAN OF MARS; Ace

Groff Conklin (Ed): GREAT SCIENCE
FICTION ABOUT DOCTORS; Collier

Shirley Jackson: THE SUNDIAL; Ace

Frank Belknap Long: THE HORROR
FROM THE HILLS; Arkham House

Phil Nowlan: ARMAGEDDON 2419; Ace

G.M. Wallis: LEGEND OF LOST EARTH;
Ace

Horace Walpole: CASTLE OF OTRANTO;
Norton

April 1

Daniel F. Galouye: LORDS OF THE
PSYCHON; Bantam

G.K. Chesterton: THE RETURN OF DON
QUIXOTE; Dufour

R.D. Spector: GOTHIC NOVELS AND
TALES; Bantam

April 5

Avram Davidson (Ed): THE BEST FROM
FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION;
Doubleday

L. Sprague de Camp: THE ANCIENT
ENGINEERS; Doubleday

April 15

Nathaniel West: THE DREAM LIFE OF
BALSO SNELL; Farrar

April 16

Martin Greenberg (Ed): MEN AGAINST
THE STARS; Pyramid

April 22

Andre Norton: KEY OUT OF TIME; World

April Release Date

H.P. Lovecraft: BEST STORIES OF
H.P.L.; Arkham House

Robert P. Mills (Ed): WORLDS OF
SCIENCE FICTION; Dial

Ray Russell: THE CASE AGAINST
SATAN; Paperback Library

Jules Verne: DR. OX'S EXPERIMENT;
Macmillan

May 1

Damon Knight: IN DEEP; Berkley

John Taine: THE TIME STREAM, THE
PURPLE SAPPHIRE (and) THE GREATEST
ADVENTURE; Dover

May 10

A.E. van Vogt: BEAST; Doubleday

May 14

John Christopher: THE LONG WINTER;
Fawcett

May 16

Hal Clement: FROM OUTER SPACE;
Avon

May 31

J. Sheridan LeFanu: BEST SUPER-
NATURAL STORIES; Dover

May Release Date

H.P. Lovecraft: COLLECTED POEMS;
Arkham House

LETTERS

ROBERT BLOCH
Studio City, Calif.

Dear Lin: Many thanks for SPECTRUM and for putting me on the list ... believe me, this fills a long-felt need. And fills it extremely well, to judge from the calibre of the reviewing.

By some coincidence I attended a LASFS meeting last night (my first in many months) and ran into old-time fan Samuel D. Russell (ACOLYTE) who tells me of plans to bring out a fanzine devoted to the fantasy field, with accent on the weird and gothic. This, together with your effort, will help bridge a gap I've noted in the fanzine field; of recent years there has been a noticeable lack of coverage of the literature.

All best wishes attend you in this project ... and Happy New Year!

Robert Bloch

BOB TUCKER
Box 478
Heyworth, Ill.

Cheers: I note with alarm that the second issue of SPECTRUM is to be mailed on the 31st of this month ... were you late or must I blame the delay on the mails? ((We was late.))

Well, whatever the cause, I'm glad to get it and want more.

If you are as fortunate as I was, with Bloomington (and SF) News-letter, you will soon build a magnificent library of (sshhhh! -- free) books. But you would be wise to not bandy that about or print this paragraph, lest fifty thousand fan editors wake up and try to board the bandwagon. ((Tut. Room for all.))

I like your reviewing style. You aren't a critic, thank ghod, but you consistently include enough sensible information (even in that squib on A FOR ANDROMEDA) to enable me to make a choice. Huzza and all that ...

You like mysteries? I have one coming from Doubleday this year. Date unknown, title unknown as yet. ((Have Doubleday send us a free copy and we'll review it. Magnificent library, here we come.))

Bob Tucker

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM
Ace Books, Inc.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Lin: Gee gosh wow! A fanzine from Lin Carter! And no loot needed to keep on getting it. Privileged me.

Interesting as one might expect. I don't agree with everything of course. Who'd expect one to? For instance, I found Philip K. Dick's latest novel, THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, a thundering bore. I reject the theme, I don't understand the sick mentality that wants to bury itself in such a concentrated fantasy world, I suspect Dick of being fascinated by Zen negativism and Japanese obscurantism, in short I found the work strictly ugh. A fine talent gone to waste.

Comparing it to THE SOUND OF HIS HORN is unfair. Sarban is deliciously erotic ... a real sado-masochistic compilation of sex fantasies. But I couldn't accuse Sarban of being in love with the Axis future ...

Now for your best novels of 1962. What I object to is the cavalier omission of a lot of good novels published in Ace. ((Put us on the Ace reviewers' list and we'll see what happens ... magnificent library, hoo boy.)) For instance, I think John Brunner has not received the rating he deserves, as one of the consistently best present day writers: for entertainment, for ideas, for ability at storytelling, he is, to me, head and shoulders above Blish's tedious technique. TIMES WITHOUT NUMBER, THE SUPER BARBARIANS, SECRET AGENT OF TERRA, all deserve candidacy. Again, does not SECOND ENDING rate a 1962 challenge also, as an Ace 1962 release? ((Can't quite agree. Brunner is a talented gent, and shows signs of doing some first rate stuff -- THE DREAMING EARTH, reviewed in this issue, for instance -- but he hasn't yet come close to Jim Blish. Blish is uneven, but at his best he is up there at the top with Heinlein. As for SECOND ENDING, it was far inferior to the same author's HOSPITAL STATION, and read to me rather like a 1942 lead ovelette in Thrilling Wonder.)

Not to mention some notice of THE JEWELS OF APTOR as the work of an upcoming new talent? ((Quite right -- good swashbuckling stuff. But our "Best of '62" list was supposed to be the very cream of the crop, not a general list of the dozen best.))

Speaking of Tolkien-type worlds, get hold of Jane Gaskell's KING'S DAUGHTER (English printing only, Hutchinson). Fine stuff, and the real brew. ((I read her STRANGE EVIL some years back, and it was pretty good; will order a copy of this one.))

Or watch for Andre Norton's WITCH WORLD, Ace, April '63.

Don Wollheim

BRUCE ROBBINS
90 Stoneleigh Court
Rochester 18, N.Y.

Dear Lin: I want to thank you for SPECTRUM/ONE, which I found enjoyable, interesting, and useful.

I have always found your reviews so. I think I first read you in Xero, but also I recently acquired some old Inside's and discovered that you wrote those helpful reviews too. You are to me a "good" reviewer because our interests seemingly coincide.

Perhaps the most interesting article you wrote that I have read was the one in Xero about Jules Verne. Your announcement of the making of CAPTAIN GRANT'S CHILDREN into a film starring Hayley Mills and Maurice

Chevalier was the only one I saw until it came out, and had me in eager anticipation for the year or so that intervened -- and the anticipation was not for naught, as I saw the film three times in two days (each time with another group of friends and paying the full price), bought the two 45 rpm records of songs from the movie, the \$3.98 soundtrack album, and began a search of Rochester for what is probably the only copy of the book in this area. Our huge library didn't have it, and none of our bookstores had heard of it, but I found it among a "miscellaneous" stack of old books. ((It was a charming little picture, wasn't it? Glad you liked the book, too -- I am very fond of Verne. He is an astonishingly good writer, with a delightful sort of straight-faced humor to his work. Tell your local library that Associated Bookstores of Westport, Conn., are bringing all of Jules Verne into print, in English, in hardcover. About 23 volumes in print so far.))

Oh yes, I also bought the comic book version, and did some researching among my "orderly" collection, finding that the book is still popular in other countries, and in Holland there is even a complete paperback edition with all the original illustrations impeccably reproduced.

I am surprised more readers didn't react to that article of yours -- ((Most readers seemed to think it was dull, not telling them anything they didn't know.)) -- I guess there aren't as many sf-reading fans around as there used to be. My sole reason for being in fandom is that I read sf -- lots of it, and like to. I read old as well as new stuff, all the magazines, and all the new paperbacks (hardcovers only now and then -- they cost too much). I derive my sole enjoyment from fanzines only when they deal with sf -- folksongs, con reports, etc., just don't interest me unless they are sf oriented.

SPECTRUM was the sort of fanzine I was going to change my Paradox into before all the printer's ink evaporated out of my blood. Surely not enough books are published in two months to warrant a twenty-page fanzine each time. ((You kidding, Bruce? 62 hardcovers and paperbacks were published in the sf-fantasy-weird field in the period January-February 1963. We can't even review half of them!))

As I'm going to college next year (MIT most probably) I'm in need of one or two steady sources of listings of recent, good sf. A combination of SPECTRUM and Stephen's Book Service seems best -- your likes are close to mine, and Steve Takacs gives the best damn service of any sf dealer I have tried. So please keep up SPECTRUM.

Bruce Robbins

JOHN BERRY
31 Campbell Park Ave.
Belmont, Belfast 4,
Northern Ireland

Dear Lin: Thanks for SPECTRUM/ONE. There has long been a requirement for an amateur magazine dealing specifically with science fiction and its close relations. I am looking forward to reading your "guest reviews" and may you get some really big names.

I was intrigued by your review of A FOR ANDROMEDA. Lucky for your peace of mind that you didn't see the TV programme. Actually, you did a hell of a good job and gave the blasted thing all the lash it

required, in fact, you were rather kind to it. I've a son aged 12, and he even turned up his nostrils at some of the queer things that happened. I'm talking about the TV version. ((Released in the British Isles, only.)) For example, the Cartel Assassin was about nine feet tall, with a chauffeur's uniform, complete with breeches. It wasn't so bad this assassin giving somebody the works in London, but the action takes place on an island close to the Scottish coast. The assassin has instructions to bump off the chappie you refer to as the 'Hero,' and he chooses the seclusion of a deserted island to attempt the dirty deed, which would have been welcomed by almost everyone. So there he is, with telescopic rifle, hugging a couple of blades of grass as cover, on this deserted Scottish island, still replete in chauffeur's uniform, with peaked cap and breeches. The TV show was impressive only in the introduction, which featured suitable mysterious music, flashes of a pulsating sun, and then gradually appearing, was the face of a sort of Greek Goddess. Then, of course, was the utterly fantastic sequel, 'ANDROMEDA BREAKTHROUGH.' If you haven't read it (presuming they actually have the nerve to publish a book version) do yourself a favour and don't.

By the way, I liked your front cover, well set out and all that. Say, would you like me to write a four or five page thesis on the Ian Fleming 'James Bond' stories? I've read them all, indeed, I have them all. There has been a film made of one of the stories, and they've been published all over the world, I'm sure you've either read or heard of the character. A humorous thesis, of course. I'm a sort of authority on spy stories (says he modestly) and have a vast library of both sercon and fictional spy stuff, and would write humorously but critically, and, as there is so much S*E*X in the stories it will be necessary to incorporate a few opinions about this aspect of the stories. Let me know if you're interested, and anyway, best wishes for your progress with SPECTRUM.

John Berry

((The way we see SPECTRUM now, we won't be using any critical articles as such, but plain reviews only, so thanks anyway, John. Lack of space is the main reason, for, as anyone knows who has seen any of my own stuff on Lovecraft, Tolkien -- and a new study coming up on Merritt -- I like critical essays. But we just don't have room for anything much outside of book reviews.))

RICHARD E. ROBERTS
Bantam Books, Inc.
New York 16, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Carter: I think that SPECTRUM has not only the freshest reviews in the best language, but also the most sensible attitude I've seen in a long time. I wish you much success, and will try to see to it that any new Bantam books are sent to you. Please continue to send me SPECTRUM, I enjoyed this one enormously -- even though we're about to reprint Something Wicked This Way Comes.

Richard Roberts

JAMES BLISH
New York, N.Y.

Dear Lin: SPECTRUM is a most worthy project -- the reviewing silence lately has been deafening -- and well begun, too. Thanks for the kisses bestowed on A Life for the Stars. A few points of fact:

1) The Night Shapes -- whatever you may think of its quality -- is not science fiction, any more than The Frozen Year was. Somehow I cannot persuade Ballantine to publish anything of mine without their labelling it sf, even when it wasn't so intended, even when I myself determinedly say that it's something else. If The Night Shapes is bad sf, that doesn't surprise me at all; it is in fact a historical novel with a slight trace of fantasy. (And the US edition does not contain an important preface which establishes this. The Canadian edition does.)

2) A Life for the Stars isn't my first juvenile of what you call the Heinlein type (I think of it as the del Rey type, but no matter). The first was The Star Dwellers.

3) Much as I hate to tout readers off buying the book version, the hard-cover differs from the Analog serial only by two pages of introduction and a set of chapter-titles. Otherwise the serial is word-for-word the same as the book.

Thanx for Xmas shantax. (Wish I could persuade both JWCjr and you -- though he certainly ought not to need it by now -- that it isn't "Oakie." The word is "Okie," derived from Oklahoma.)

Jim Blish

((1. The Night Shapes was an amusing parody of the Haggard/Doyle/Burroughs type -- but its inclusion of live dinosaurs living in a "land that time forgot" lost valley in Africa makes it sf by my definition. 2. You're right -- The Star Dwellers was ostensibly a juvenile -- and a pretty good one. 3. I don't care if the hardcover version of A Life for the Stars is exactly the same as the magazine serial -- get it anyway, folks, it's great!))

ROBERT JENNINGS
3819 Chambers Drive
Nashville 11, Tenn.

Dear Lin: While I found most of your reviews well written, excellently handled, with a nice slant and opinion I admire and find worthwhile, I'm gonna have ta pick a few bones with chu.

Like, for instance, your review of A for Andromeda. The review was Well Done, but I don't like the opinions you drew, and shall leap to the defense of this volume, which I finished reading a short time ago. As you so plainly note, the book did deal with a very, er, stereotyped plot, handled with all the stereotyped expectations and all like that. But I still don't think it deserves sharp criticism. In an older volume of Treasure Island the preface contains a discussion of the book, and contrasted it to the dime adventure novels which were then

selling. As the writer pointed out, Treasure Island utilized the same basic plot lines as a couple of hundred adventure pamphlets selling weekly during that period. The hunt for treasure, the pirates, the Evil Crew, the adventure and action, was the stuff which flowed abundantly from the pens of Ned Buntline and Victor Appleton ((Not in Stevenson's time!)) in those past years. Yet obviously there is a vast difference between Piracy on the High Seas or The American Lads find Adventure in the Caribbean -- and Treasure Island. The difference is in the way the story is handled. From a hackish piece of high adventure, Stevenson wove a masterpiece of story telling, complete with memorable characters, fast paced, suspenseful action scenes, and in general a book which is pretty much regarded as a classic these days.

Whatthehell does all this have to do with Andromeda? Simple, even tho the book used an oldie and hackish sort of theme, peopled with the same fascinating stereotypes we first knew in Astounding Stories of Super Science (or worse), the handling of the book raises it three or four notches above the general run. Like for instance, the writing in the book, after a slow beginning, was, I felt, extremely well handled. The Brilliant Scientist is a mite too brilliant of course (anybody that can figure out an interstellar code message on the train to London, or the complete DNA synthesis formula, and a rejuvenating formula from this in one night, as well as build a monstrous computer from interstellar instructions in less than a year, has got brains), yet the handling of his character tones this thousand watt intellect down to something approaching reader-understanding.

And the story, at least when I read it, didn't seem so sharply contrasted as your short synopsis indicated. You neglected to mention that there are all sorts of complications in the tale. The government doesn't just up and decide to build this machine (if I recall correctly, there was much hesitation on the matter, and only the insistence of our Brilliant Scientist persuaded the tightfisted politicians to foot the bill), and underneath all this hot and heavy Monster Theme is a good deal of character interplay, which should be worth at least a brief mention in thy review.

I could go on and say Other Things about the book, such as the fact that having Ole Timey Communists on the lot isn't as stupid as it sounds (we've got Ole Timey Nazis on our projects, and some Ole Timey Communists as well, but we can conveniently rationalize this away, just as the British government did, and you forget that our Brilliant Scientist refused to work without his friend and partner, who happened to be the Ole Timey Commie), and point out that the Brilliant Scientist, after building his toy, decided that this was as far as the project should go, but no one would listen (so somebody at least knew what the hell was coming off), ya know, things like that.

As I said, it's an A-1 hack plot, but the handling sets it apart from other stories. I noticed that this entire story took place over several year-long periods of time (which appealed to me, had this been handled in the Typical Hacking Manner to match the plot, the story would have been about a third as long, and would have taken place in a maximum of six months, total). Oh well, so much for this mess, needless to say I enjoyed the book muchly, hackish plot tho it be, because of the handling.

Bob Jennings

((Well.....what can I say? You agreed with me that plot was hackish, characters stereotypes, etc., but liked A for Andromeda only for the way it was handled. I felt the whole job badly done in the extreme, handling and all.

It all boils down to the fact that literary criticism is not an exact science at all, but nothing more than a matter of personal taste. I, for example, strongly disagree with Eliot, Pound, and Robert Graves when they rip into Paradise Lost, my favorite English epic, which they feel is empty rhetoric, bad taste, and flamboyant nonsense. However, neither Eliot, Pound, Graves, nor, for that matter, I, are wrong. There is no right and wrong in criticism, there is only personal taste. However, there is such a thing as bad taste...))

Thanks to Hannes Bok, John Baxter, Steve Perrin, L. Sprague de Camp, Miles Eaton, Ruth Berman, August Derleth, and several dozen other nice people whose letters we did not have room to print.

((Unpaid Religious Advt.: In June, THE READERS' GUIDE TO BARSOOM AND AMTOR, by David G. Van Arnam, with Krenkel cover and gatefold Map of Barsoom by Larry Ivie. Order from Dick Lupoff, 210 East 73d St., N.Y., N.Y. \$2.00.))

SPECTRUM/TWO
Lin Carter
Apartment 4-C
2028 Davidson Avenue
New York 53, New York



PRINTED MATTER ONLY
RETURN REQUESTED

Return Postage Guaranteed

The Coulsons
Route #5
Wabash, Indiana