

THE DEVIL'S WORK
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80302 USA. This is intended for the Aug 73 mailing of
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SNAP #1 - BILL KUNKEL & ARNIE KATZ

Katz: Your observations on the quality of the audience of any given advertising media seem, to this semi-outsider, to be quite correct. When Analog went large size they conducted a reader survey to prove that advertisers could use the same plates to good effect. But Campbell said that the agencies didn't believe the results (they must have had previous contact with sf readers). But some results are possible. Look what Geis has done by making an end-run around fuggdom by advertising in the prozines. The lunatic fringe of sf is apparently just that, a fringe, but a vocal fringe which is obscuring the true composition of the sf readership. But even so, I wonder what the true nature of the majority of sf readers is. Apparently it is not very responsive to non-sf products, or even some sf-related products. Dover, and most other publishers, don't find it worthwhile to advertise. (A sale of thirty-two copies of a book isn't much justification for advertising in Analog. Seventy-five responses to an ad in F&SF isn't very good. Even the SF Book Club gave up for a long time.) Richard Witter has observed that his customers' demand is very price-elastic. This may be why advertising in sf magazines is hardly worthwhile. An average trade edition of a sf title might sell 3,000 copies, the book--club edition 25,000 copies (in some part due to the sending of the book whether or not it is rejected (though they usually honor rejections)) and the paperback 100000 copies, or the same order of magnitude as the circulation of Analog, with roughly the same price (though pbs are accelerating their prices faster than the sf magazines). So what chance has any product with a price higher than a trade book? Another problem is that if you're selling a product by direct mail, you're handicapped because the average person won't send for it, whereas he might buy it if it were in a store when he walked in, especially if he'd been made aware of the product through advertising.

But in contrast look at other specialized magazines with circulations of the same order of magnitude, or one higher. The hi-fi magazines are loaded with repeat advertisers. True, they're selling expensive products on which I don't know the profit margin, but I suspect the percentage of buying readers is much higher. For years Audio had a circulation of about 20,000, with about half of the pages devoted to advertising. They obviously had to be reaching a quality audience, in contrast to the Ziff-Davis magazines in various fields which either try for the lowest common denominator or a step up. The photography, car, etc. magazines all exhibit plenty of advertising and circulation (except for a few obviously low-budget efforts).

A possible explanation is that these other specialized magazines are relating man to something tangible in the real world. The few fiction magazines left aren't relating man to tangibles. The detective and western pulps left don't have much advertising either. The fiction magazines are read by Buying Man, but either he is in a minority of the readership or his interests are too diverse to enable any one product to advertise successfully therein, even a product related to the subject of the magazine.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL: WRITER, EDITOR, LEGEND - GEORGE TURNER

You should have checked the publication dates of all of Campbell's stories. You would thus have avoided the idea that "Don A. Stuart" evolved after the publication of the last of the super-science epics (by the way, The Moon Is Hell was the last published that reads as if it

were written then, "The Wake Makers" seems to have actually been contemporary with its publication). You seem to have missed the sequel to The Mightiest Machine, i. e., The Incredible Planet, though it is actually three stories, "The Incredible Planet, "The Interstellar Search" and "The Infinite Atom".

Campbell didn't lack literary training, his teacher told him he'd never be a saleable author.

You also failed to mention that Campbell wanted to drop the Astounding from Astounding Science Fiction (just after changing it from Astounding Stories) but was foiled by the Mar 39 issue of Science Fiction.

As for Nourse disappearing from ASF because of a grudge by Campbell, it seems improbable. Campbell published George O. Smith after Smith had acceded to Campbell's first wife. He never seemed like a man who harbored a grudge.

As for psi stories in Astounding Campbell said that he was forced to publish many of them because he could get nothing better. Writers figured that by writing psi stories Campbell would automatically buy them. With the advent of too many other markets Campbell no longer had the leverage to get what he wanted all of the time.

Your once-over-lightly article displays a number of good points. It's too bad you didn't sit down with a complete set of Campbell's works and do the thoroughly excellent job I think you're capable of.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 - RICHARD E. GEIS

Vortex was used by Gordon Kull for his fanzine before the U. S. prozine used it.

Your memory is slipping, your first letters in SS and TWS were published when Oscar Friend was on his way out and Sam Merwin, Jr. took over. Mines took over from Merwin, not vice versa.

SYNAPSE (for FAPA 143) - Jack SPEER

But in England copyright is for life plus fifty years, thus Wells' estate would have grounds in Great Britain, though not in the U. S., for any piracy of The War Of the Worlds.

Where do you get the idea that "Science-fiction took form in the 1920s, and took many of its ideas from the beginning of that decade or earlier, including some that science had abandoned by the time Gernsback said "Fiat Amazing Stories"."? This common fallacy seems to stem from Gernsback's lack of credit lines on his reprints. And despite all the scholarship since then the false ideas keep weeding up.