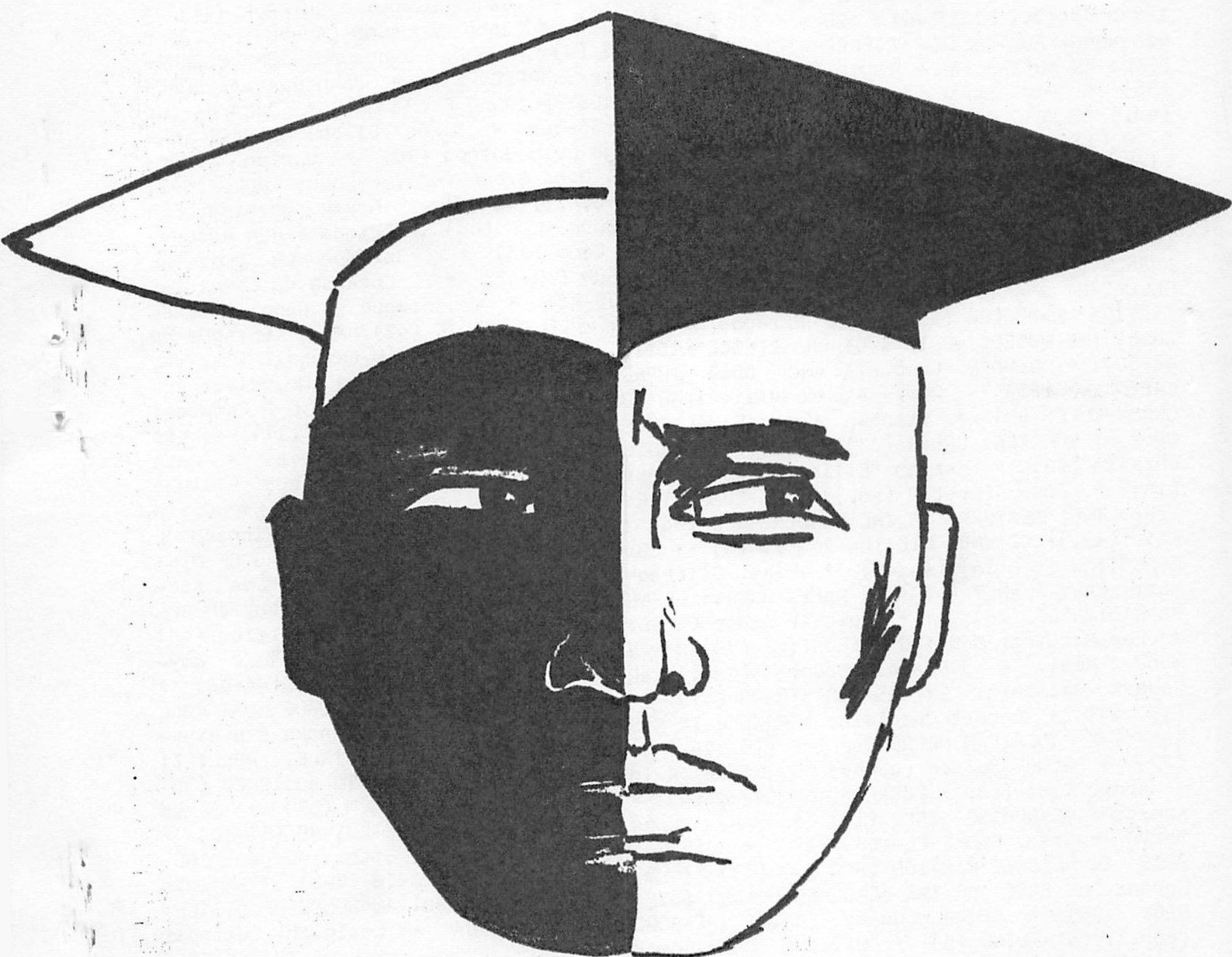


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S F COMMENTARY 23



Perry A Chapdelaine

REVERSE RACISM

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 SION (34) * Frank Lunney (ed.): BEABOHEMA (5) * Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell (eds.): STARLING (5) * William MacMahon (49) * MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION (48) * Yasujiro Ozu (dir.): AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON (14) * Yasujiro Ozu (dir.): END OF SUMMER (14) * Yasujiro Ozu (dir.): LATE AUTUMN (14) * Ted Pauls (8-9) * Sam Peckinpah (dir.): THE WILD BUNCH (14) * Lester del Rey: HELEN O'LOY (13) * Frank Roberts: A HAPPENING (37-38) * Frank Roberts: IT COULD BE YOU (34) * David Rome: ROBINSON (37) * Franz Rottensteiner: CHEWING GUM FOR THE VULGAR (SFC 19) (6, 11) * Franz Rottensteiner: MR BUDRYS & THE ACTIVE LIFE (SFC 19) (11) * Olaf Ruhen: THE IMMORTAL (36) * Joanna Russ (6-7) * James Sallis: AND THEN THE DARK (15) * James Sallis: FACES AND HANDS (15-16) * James Sallis: A FEW LAST WORDS (14-17) * James Sallis: FRONT AND CENTAUR (15) * James Sallis: THE HISTORY MAKERS (15) * James Sallis: JEREMIAH (15) * James Sallis: JIM & MARY (15, 16) * James Sallis: KAZOO (16) * Joe Sanders (5) * SCIENCE FICTION DISCUSSION GROUP (48) * T L Sherred: ALIEN ISLAND (10) * Robert Silverberg (7-8) * Robert Silverberg: CUBE ROOT OF UNCERTAINTY (8) * Robert Silverberg (ed.): SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME (12-14) * Robert Silverberg: SON OF MAN (7-8) * Robert Silverberg: TOWER OF GLASS (7-8) * Ron Smith: STRONG ATTRACTION (36) * Christopher Stasheff: WARLOCK IN SPIKE OF HIMSELF (21-23) * Douglas Stewart: RUTHERFORD (37) * Theodore Sturgeon: MICROCOSMIC GOD (13) * SYMPOSIUM

S F COMMENTARY

NUMBER 23

SEPTEMBER 1971
50 pages

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the world's leading
English language fanzine
when and if
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9 surface mail; £4 air mail, from Malcolm Edwards,
28 Kinch Grove, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9TF. Despite
the tone of the editorial, I would particularly like
traded fanzines, any type, from anywhere.

Back cover illustration in No 22 by Jeff Schalles.

I MUST BE TALKING TO MY FRIENDS

* I have nothing to say in this editorial.

I could have something to say: provided I picked out the most trivial incident that happened to me during the last four months (I got out of bed this morning! howbouthat!), wrote at least four pages about the least interesting aspects of that incident, included at least five of the worst jokes made by Melbourne fans during the last few months, and made sure that I insulted not less than ten interstate or overseas fans. Under no circumstances should I mention science fiction, and I should be funnee: desperately, hysterically, boringly funny.

Some people in USA believe that fanzine editorials should read like that; worse still, they seem to say that all fanzine editorials should read like that. Even worse, they say that the contents of all fanzines should contain material as uninteresting as their own.

I would certainly like to write my usual rambling talk to my friends. But if I do, then maybe some people might say: "That is not The Right Kind of Fanzine; The Only Kind of Fanzine is the One I Publish." And I wouldn't care a jot.

However, some fanzine editors in USA have actually begun to believe therubbish that some other fanzine editors (most notably Arnie Katz in FOCAL POINT) ~~have been telling them. Katz's own taste runs to~~ singing duplicators, and unfunny jokes traded by Arnie and his friends at conventions. That's all right; let the so-called "fannish" editors mumble away to themselves, say I. I can always pay attention when they say something interesting, or even important. However, people like Katz and John Berry and Terry Carr seem to say that they oppose anybody who doesn't agree with them. Publish Shakespeare or Henry James in fanzines today, and they wouldn't stand a chance. People like them actually think; no good at all.

As a result, some people are Selling Out. I hear a rumour that even Pete Weston, publisher of SPECULATION, is thinking of publishing a "fannish fanzine". Mike Glicksohn says in the latest ENERGUMEN that "I am who I am and I like who I like and you can take it or leave it as you see fit" (which is the text of my sermon today), but at the same time his magazine is heading in a disappointingly flippant direction. I think he's on the verge of Sell-out Number Two, despite the efforts of his gallant wife Susan. Dick Geis closed down SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, for very good reasons, but in the light of subsequent events, that's almost Sellout Number Three.

You may remember that in 1969, BEABOHEMA was the magazine that ran for about 100 pages per issue and featured professional writers being nasty to each other. I still don't know how Lunney managed to press everybody's buttons; but the fur began to fly, and BAB gained a Hugo nomination in 1970. Finally Lunney became sick of all the back-biting (long after his readers did) and decided to change course altogether. Unfortunately he fell under the influence of the villain of this piece, Arnie Katz. So again Frank missed his chance to publish the really great fanzine he obviously will publish one day and last heard of he was reprinting dully-written nostalgia material from the 1950s. (Yeah - I'm just reading ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, and can't see anything in the BAB article that justifies Francis T Laney's reputation.) So, at the moment, BEABOHEMA reads a lot better than it did a year ago, but not nearly as well as it should. More importantly, I think Frank Lunney, like many other fanzine editors recently, is publishing the fanzine he thinks he should publish, rather than the kind of magazine he really wants to publish.

And why has enmity and depression suddenly struck me down? That's a depressing story in itself. I had two weeks holidays; I got a cold/flu on the first day of the holidays and lost it about the last day of the holidays; as I couldn't get out of bed to see such mind-bending epics as ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES, I read the last six month's fanzines for two weeks (and wrote 5000 words of reviews and re-translation of a Stanislaw Lem article, as well). Now can you see why I'm depressed?

No? Well, subscribe to all the current fanzines and you will see what I mean. I've read magazines like GRANFALLOON which Linda and Ron Bushyager produce excellently. Quite often they run some very readable material. But at the same time I notice a regrettable tendency towards two-page, highly decorated articles, which contain very little. No doubt under pressure from Our Villains (FOCAL POINT attacked GRANFALLOON, as well as lots of other magazines) the Bushyagers are striving for "balance", whereas they might more profitably go after good writing. In the latest ENERGUMEN, Mike Glicksohn talks about "balance": a few of his articles are always funny, he's put Canadian fandom on the map, but I rarely find anything I can read with great interest. Oddly enough, the only American fanzines that have real bite in them look like very fannish fanzines when you first open them; they are YANDRO and STARLING. Bob and Juanita Coulson don't want me to advertise their magazine, so I will talk about STARLING. Its writers talk very well about topics that interest me intermittently - rock music, the drug culture, etc. But Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell also manage to include in their pages one of the few good book reviewers left in US fanzines - Joe Sanders, in his column, WITH MALICE TOWARDS ALL. I agree with Terry Carr on one matter - the short-short book reviews are just not good enough (except when they appear in SFC); what we need though are writers of long, reflective book reviews (such as you find in SFC), and feature articles (which have nearly disappeared altogether from US fanzines).

Darkness is everywhere; only SFC and SCYTHROP and QUICKSILVER, and a few others remain. This beacon, at least, will stay firm. (*Rah! Good speech!*) Quick - some sanity wanted:

* URSULA K LE GUIN (3321 North West Thurman, Portland, Oregon 97210, USA)

Inadequate, but sincere, and awestruck, thanks for S F COMMENTARY 19. I read it straight through from beginning to end, and have never fi-

nished any amateur publication with such a sense of satisfaction and respect. It's splendid to have Rottensteiner on Panshin/Heinlein; I shall be teaching a couple of s f workshops this summer, and if there is one of those STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND addicts grokking away among the students, I shall study up my Rottensteiner and disincorporate him. Rottensteiner would have my complete respect if I were not always being brought up short by his anti-Americanism, which sometimes seems to verge on bigotry, and spoils his admirable exegeses with a kind of emotional pettiness. I also hope, if I have a bright student or two, to use the Stanislaw Lem articles. The best thing about the issue, though, was the fine aerial view it presented of the Intellect of John Foyster. And then that snitty little note saying please not to ask him for the next issue of JOE (or whatever it's called now). How does one approach the Edmund Wilson of Mulgrave? Can you steal me a copy? Could you tell him I have a very beautiful, nuttā daughter?

SFC 20 was no slouch either. Marcel Thaon's letter was good news; and I can add to it, that when I was in Vancouver for the meeting of the British Columbia s f fans, I remarked more or less loudly several times that I thought Philip Dick the best American s f writer, and got lots of contented nods and even a few Of courses. Whereas here in the prophet's own country the response is more likely to be Oh really.

One very small protest. In you (very telling) discussion of the LOCUS polls, you say, "CHRONOCULES, which is at least as good as AND CHAOS DIED... came 13th. D G Compton has never appeared at a Worldcon, presumably." I don't quite follow. Surely this is not meant to refer to Joanna Russ? I don't know whether she has or hasn't been at any Worldcons, but does it make any difference? There are certain reputations which rest upon activities, self-advertisements, string-pullings, etc., more than upon the actual merit of the novels written - but not, for God's sake, Joanna Russ's! Nor is it the absence of such shenanigans that is keeping Compton back from the recognition he deserves. I think several things are involved, and one of them is perhaps his Britishness. Of tone, setting, language, mood, everything. I personally like it, and prefer it vastly to the dehydrated Instant American style and locale used by some English writers; but Americans (as is seldom noticed by non-Americans) vary; and quite a lot of them are simply confused, alienated, by a genuinely foreign style. "If he writes my language why doesn't he write it like I would?" is what it comes down to. It is funny. A lot of people can take Proxima Centauri in their stride, but only if they feel that all the while they have a toehold in Poughkeepsie - as it were.

Salaams, obeisances, and more thanks. I hope next Easter you have time to colour some eggs. (July 20, 1971)*

* Better still, I hope I have time to open some presents at Christmas. At the present rate, I'll be producing this issue on Boxing Day.

I would have liked to take this opportunity to begin a discussion of SFC 19, (and it was meant to stir discussion, not sink into the slough of praise/blame/indifference that currently surrounds it). However, Ursula Le Guin's pleasant letter points in particular to the remarkable reaction I had to my off-the-cuff comments in SFC 20 about the LOCUS POLL and awards in general.

I might spend up to three or four complete days on a 2000 word review, but no review I've ever written has sparked the reaction of those few rapid-fire remarks. In its way, that was about the most casual editorial I've written, and I hoped nobody would really take it seriously, least of all the Browns themselves. Indeed, most people took it in the spirit with which it was given, although people still wrote about it with a fervour that they certainly didn't give to SFC 19. However, the one remark that Mrs Le Guin mentions annoyed a lot of people, and, in this one case, with good reason. In my comment I meant to imply that some people seem to climb onto polls and award lists far more easily than others; the only difference between some contenders seems to be that the voters know one contender personally and they don't know the other. Some other correspondents imply that Joanna Russ attends very few conventions, and so my example was badly chosen. Somebody mentioned that Kurt Vonnegut gained a Hugo nomination although he refers scornfully to fandom and tries to separate himself from the "s f" label; I must admit that this example in particular demolishes the basis of my remark.

But my odd little remarks stung anyway, in the most unexpected ways;

* ROBERT SILVERBERG (5020 Goodridge Avenue, New York, New York 10471, USA)

Your monumental reissue of EXPLODING MADONNA arrived last week and I've been reading it with considerable pleasure. A splendid magazine, even when it's perverse and infuriating. However, I prefer not to comment specifically; I'm at a precarious moment in my career when I've halted all writing for an indefinite period while I rethink some of my basic premises about the art of fiction, and the last thing I want to do right now is get drawn into public theoretical discussion of other people's work. (I finished a novel called THE BOOK OF SKULLS in late winter and haven't written anything since, the longest layoff since I began writing full time in 1955. At the moment I feel very much like retiring for good, and coasting along on anthology work, royalties from old books, and some private income. This in no way means I've run dry of ideas: only that I'm not sure I want to bother putting them on paper.)

One thing I do want to take issue with in EM: somebody's backhanded snotty thrust at John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR, which is put down because it was written in only five months, by Brunner's admission, whereas Dos Passos needed far longer for his book. Crap. Surely it's the book itself, the verbal object, that ought to be the critic's target, and such peripheral special knowledge as the critic may have concerning method or time of composition is irrelevant (or largely so) to his assessment.

I'm bothered, too, by your admission in SFC 20 that you gave up on TOWER OF GLASS after sixty pages. Is the book so contemptible that you couldn't have managed to plough through the remaining hundred and twenty pages before forming your opinion? It's the spectacle of seeing fans such as yourself giving up so easily on a book that called forth such efforts from its author that tempts me into retirement: what's the use of bothering, if the best I can hope for is that sort of response? Life's too short to pound typewriters for that. On the other hand, you suggest that embarrassing mess, Lem's SOLARIS, as your Hugo nominee, so perhaps our tastes are so far apart that I should rejoice in your hostility. At least I read all the way

through SOLARIS before concluding it was the work of a bungling amateur, though. (And I read it in the hope that Lem would turn out to be the titan touted by Suvin and Rottensteiner. Just another emperor without clothes, though). (June 23, 1971) *

* To which I replied with pained outcry... Well, not quite. However, I did say that this letter gave me the impression that Bob Silverberg was writing only for an audience, and now he thought the audience had let him down (as all audiences always do). Wasn't he quitting rather too easily? I also said that John Foyster's barb was aimed against John Brunner's boast that he took all of five months to write STAND ON ZANZIBAR. And I hung me 'ead, properly chastised: you win - I will read TOWER OF GLASS all the way through, and review it in SFC. That doesn't mean I'll like it, though. (However, I have to survive somehow, and I just cannot read everything I should read. Therefore, these days if I thoroughly dislike a book after the first sixty pages, I just don't have the patience to continue. There are too many other books waiting on the pile.) And as for SOLARIS - well, all I can say is that I'm sorry you cannot enjoy the book's riches. Next issue of SFC I will tell you why you should have enjoyed it... which won't convince you for a minute. *

If I gave you the impression I'm suffering from writer's block, I've misled you, and I'm sorry. My retirement this summer is wholly voluntary - honestly. If I felt like starting a new novel tomorrow morning, I could; the outline is there, the verbal skills haven't fled. I just don't feel like it: there are other things I'd rather be doing, is all. When the summer's over and outdoor life becomes less pleasant, I probably will start that book...

Of course I do feel some despair over the things the fans say. Not all things, not all fans. But the truth is I've probably ceased to be the sort of s f writer they really want, and the gulf between the average reader's expectations and my purposes has grown wider and wider in the past couple of years. When a book like TOWER OF GLASS can't even win a complete reading from one of the most intelligent and dedicated of the fan critics, my impulse is to shrug and go off and pursue some private pleasures, like lying in the sun and reading Joyce or Faulkner. The new novel, SON OF MAN, is producing dumb comments too. (And some perceptive ones.) In an ultimate sense I don't really care what readers say about me, but when my motivation to work is low anyway, a barrage of silly fan reviews is more likely than not to send me toward the swimming pool rather than the typewriter. (I was quite pleased with that Gillam review of CUBE ROOT OF UNCERTAINTY, incidentally. One of the finest discussions of my work I've ever seen, and quite heartening.) (August 15, 1971) *

* With any luck, your comment may stir Barry into more Silverberg reviews. One of my other favourite reviewers, Malcolm Edwards, also mentioned a series on your recent books, but last I heard he was lying out in the sun as well, enjoying the summer holidays.

Well, that was the result of one brief comment in SFC 20. Here's the result of another, equally brief comment: Ted Pauls' reply is on the next page. When I made the sarcastic comment about Charlie Brown's BEST FAN CRITIC category, I mainly had in mind George Turner's magnificent essay ON WRITING ABOUT

SCIENCE FICTION. This article appeared in AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW No 18, and still remains in my mind as one of the best things John Bangsund ever published. It occurs to me that very few current readers of SFC or SCY-THROP would have read George's article, so I will try to work out some way to reprint it sometime. To pick a few of George Turner's remarks at random: he says that a critic is "the anatomist and microscopist of literature,... who watches trends of social movement and philosophic thinking and rescues appropriate works from oblivion at the moment when their impact will at last be made... Criticism requires extensive knowledge of literary techniques, language and languages, philosophy, history, psychology, and a sufficient smattering of all really important subjects to be able to bone up on them at a moment's notice." On the other hand, "the prime purpose of a review is to present a description of the work under notice, so that the reader may have some advance idea of whether it will interest him or not." If you choose the latter definition, then Ted Pauls must hold his place in any poll of s f reviewers.

* TED PAULS (1448 Meridene Drive, Baltimore, Maryland 21239, USA)

Let me assure you that I agree with you that I am a reviewer far more than a "critic", whatever that is. Indeed; a couple of weeks after the poll results appeared, Charlie Brown and I sat in his apartment discussing them, and I named several reviewers that I felt were better than me. None of them were among the people you listed, though, possibly because they aren't very well known in the USA. I've only seen a few of Rottensteiner's critiques, and find him interesting but rather violently opinionated. Frankly I confess that I cannot endure Lem for more than two pages at a time, and as he makes a practice of never writing fewer than five about anything, I have minimal acquaintance with his essays.

You should bear in mind that all such polls are popularity contests, in which quality is not the only important factor. The first qualification is that you must be known to the voters, and I write reviews for nearly every major fanzine in the United States. That's why I won the LOCUS POLL so handily: virtually every person who voted had read two, five, eight, a dozen, of my reviews in the preceding few months. Most of the voters probably hadn't read anything by Foyster or Turner, and perhaps one or two essays by Lem or Rottensteiner.

David Boutland's review of Green's collection, AN AFFAIR WITH GENIUS, strikes me as being rather naive. The reviewer seems shocked and indignant that Green's "capable, ruthless, relentless" Terrans, striding forth on the path of galactic conquest in the name of their heritage of individual freedom of choice, make a practice of denying other races their own freedom of choice. But of course, sir! Green, like his big league inspiration, Robert Heinlein, is a chauvinist, who sees the Earth of the future as a larger version of the United States of today. What is more characteristic of Amerika than denying other people their freedom of choice in the name of freedom? Mike Coombs is alive and well today in South Vietnam; it is the hope of Green, Heinlein, et. al., a false hope I trust, that Coombs and his ilk will take charge when Earthmen go forward to meet other races and other civilisations, and that the Green Berets will reign from Arcturus II to the Horsehead Nebula. (May 11, 1971) *

*- JOHN FOYSTER (c/o 6 Clowes St., South Yarra, Victoria 3141) (new address)

SFC 20 shows the promise of brighter things ((than No 19)) - Charlie Brown can hardly complain about wanting to see more newer stuff, I think! With regard to your editorial: I had better say that the debating team was from Melbourne, not Monash - probably others will have pointed this out to you already. I have the usual trouble with the reviews - haven't read the books involved - except, of course, BABEL-17, and that was a long time ago. I do think it a good idea to print reviews of ye olde stories as you have done with the review of THE DEAD LADY OF CLOWN TOWN. Will this be a regular thing? If so, it would be easy for me to contribute to SFC! Aha! ALIEN ISLAND - there's another I have managed to read. I thought the book much better than Paul Anderson suggests - but then nowhere in the review does Paul say that ALIEN ISLAND is a humorous novel - which it is.

Lem's comments on Borges are rather enlightening (specifically the connection between Lem's own work and that of Borges) but I think Borges merits more space than this - oh, so do so many writers. But Borges, because of the intensity of his writing, deserves a little more than the others.

Good to see s f pushed so far down in your hit parade of books - but what is VOSS doing up there? Anyway, in your guise as a William Gaddis fan you might be interested to learn that Gaddis' next novel (J R or THE BOY INSIDE) has begun to appear (in THE DUTTON REVIEW). The first section concerns schools to a great extent and is rather like (in approach only) the section on schools in Richler's COCKSURE.

(May 29, 1971) *

* And as John Foyster has made his appearance, I can get back to letters about SFC 19. I want to print every letter I receive about SFC 19, but so far this looks as if it will be an easy task. Come on, you lot; you can't tell me you agree with all that stuff in SFC 19; I certainly don't. Until the flood of mail comes in (yes, I know most of you haven't finished reading it yet) here are some interesting comments:

* DEREK KEW (16 Helene St., Bulleen, Victoria 3105)

Thank you for your JOHN FOYSTER SPECIAL. I certainly enjoyed the issue very much. For me the highlights were the articles by Rottensteiner and Lem. Rottensteiner doesn't worry too much about a writer being a fragile organism!

I followed your suggestion and read the issues in chronological order; but I'm not sure whether the changes I noticed could be described as a development of the magazine's most important concerns. Foyster obviously wanted to see some serious discussion of s f and in this he gained success. I thought the magazine improved with time, but because I was so impressed by the Lem and Rottensteiner articles in the later issues. I also got the impression that Foyster was rather tentative about publishing the magazine at all. I could see why he kept the circulation limited, but I don't think he ever answered Rottensteiner's question ("It is not at all clear to me how you hope to offset irresponsible criticism by means of a fanzine without readers").

However, in his own contributions Foyster usually discussed other people's criticism, which was consistent with his aim of offsetting irresponsible criticism.

The article on Panshin on Heinlein was marvellous. I suppose I enjoyed seeing Rottensteiner hammering various points in Heinlein's work that have irritated me considerably. I was particularly impressed with the way he tore apart Heinlein's "survival philosophy". On the other hand, I had never explicitly noted what he calls Heinlein's solipsism. Capitalism favours idealist philosophies and solipsism is the ultimate idealist philosophy. So in this sense solipsism and fascism fit together very well.

I liked some of Heinlein's earlier stories (e.g. UNIVERSE) though even there one can note some emphasis on the person of "superior intelligence" who battles the "idiots". As Rottensteiner points out in another article, writers like Heinlein demonstrate intelligence only in comparison with the stupidity of everyone else. In MR BUDRYS AND THE ACTIVE LIFE, Rottensteiner also touched on the role of intelligence in s f when he said that s f stories are primitive moral tales which show the value of intelligence. However, the s f of the 1930s showed "intelligence" as the ability to make gadgets and save the earth. The more sophisticated development of brains versus the masses, the "competent" man versus the stupidity of his subordinates, and so on, came later. See ANALOG for any number of examples of this kind of thing. In fact I gave up reading what was once my favourite magazine because I got so sick of "supermen". I was intrigued when I first saw the slighting references to ANALOG and "Campbell's Engineers" in Australian fanzines. Later I got the impression that our critics did not so much question a reactionary philosophy, as Campbell's candidates for superior beings.

I was particularly interested in Lem's articles because, as I mentioned to you once before, I am particularly interested in the relationship between science and science fiction. Lem says that s f does not use ("has cut itself off from") the mainstream of scientific facts and hypotheses, but I don't think this is entirely correct. George Turner and John Foyster have both pointed out that s f uses science as adventure. The point is that s f takes its basic ideas from science and uses them in a very shallow way. Lem demonstrates this most clearly in his comments on computers. Surely the prevailing scientific environment determines the physical environments, gadgets, and concepts used in s f. For instance, take the spate of atomic doom stories in ASTOUNDING after World War II. Campbell received so many that he finally told his writers not to send any more.

I would agree with Sten Dahlskog that s f should provide something extra, although this demands critical standards somewhat different, or even over and above, those that guide the "mainstream". Unfortunately, I'm not sure what the extra or different standards are, or should be. For example, is there such a thing as "sense of wonder"? Should all s f possess it? If there is something "extra" to s f, then it is largely determined by the scientific environment of the time. Science is now such an acknowledged force in our society, that I doubt if even another scientific revolution comparable to that which occurred in the 1900s could spark another period in s f comparable to that of the 30s

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

CRITICANTO

George Turner reviews:

SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME
VOLUME 1

edited by ROBERT SILVERBERG
for The Science Fiction
Writers of America

Gollancz :: 1971
558 pages :: £2.25

Doubleday & Co :: 1970
558 pages :: \$7.95

This is a bloody marvellous collection, and all that follows is mere carping.

What constitutes a literary Hall of Fame?

A collection of the best stories? Many of the best are either forgotten or generally unrecognised or downright unpopular.

A collection of the most popular stories? That would include a fair leaven of the worst.

Of the most significant, basic stories? Many of these are inept and unreadable.

And in any case, how much s f outside Verne, Wells, and BRAVE NEW WORLD, can be said to be famous in the normal meaning of the word? S f really does take itself a mite seriously.

However, an anthology has to be called something, and if the local dyke can be elevated to the status of "comfort station", then "Hall of Fame" is not too much for this far more elegant structure.

Robert Silverberg's introduction does not tell us what he thinks it means, but since this is only the first of a series of such volumes it is possible that the eventual range will cover many of the possible categories. This one is limited to novellas and short stories (top limit about 17,000 words) written between 1934 and 1963, and chosen by vote of the SFWA. Thus it covers the "golden age" (and covers it most excellently well) but a further restriction is that the stories must have had American publication.

Significantly, then, Arthur C Clarke is the only non-American represented. But, alas, this does not appear to be mere chauvinism. Thinking it over, I

can recall no English writer of the period who produced much of the standard here presented. Aldiss' POOR LITTLE WARRIOR springs to mind, and... and... not much else.

One of the joys of receiving S F HALL OF FAME for review lay in not having to read it. Every story was familiar, most of them recalled in detail, and this alone says much for the standard of the selection. One or two I did re-read to catch a specific point, a few more for the sheer pleasure of re-reading. The rest are an integral part of my s f experience.

Only one seems to me unworthy of inclusion in such company, and popular opinion will no doubt howl me down. Del Rey's much lauded HELEN O'LOY seemed, when I first read it, to belong in WOMEN'S WEEKLY, and on re-reading I still think so. Pap.

A rundown of 26 stories (about 250,000 words - it is a big book) is impracticable, but some general thoughts and impressions may be in order.

Weinbaum's MARTIAN ODYSSEY, his first published story, written 27 years ago, opens the ball. It reads freshly still and its freakish conceptions retain their charm, but it is a gimmick story with no real claim to greatness. How did the SFWA vote it above his one really fine work, THE ADAPTIVE ULTIMATE?

Am I pin-pricking?

If you think so, consider the Heinlein selection, THE ROADS MUST ROLL. It's a good tale, though brash and clumsy in spots, but it can't stand for two paragraphs against such stories as GOLDFISH BOWL, IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK, or even JERRY WAS A MAN.

And the Sturgeon offering is MICROCOSMIC GOD, which won't stand up under the mildest critical reading, full of "scientific" double talk, ill-constructed and shockingly characterised, though still effective on first reading. He did a dozen better things, and Sturgeon himself is reported to think less than highly of this one.

All of which impels me to stick my neck out and make a guess: that the voters, who are all s f writers, did what you and I might do under the same circumstances - picked the tales which lingered in the memory rather than got down to business and really winnowed out the best.

Thus Blish is predictably represented by SURFACE TENSION (whose popularity has always puzzled him, so he says). But where, oh where, is the much more subtly marvellous COMMON TIME? Shame upon the SFWA!

But, as a result of such sentimental choice, this is a collection which packs a punch and most of the tales retain the shock of recognition of something new; they are stories with basic s f ideas written in a fashion that hits between wind and water, and therefore stick in the mind. For anyone not familiar with the "golden age" product, S F HALL OF FAME will be a succession of breath-taking eye-poppers, and revisiting will be a pleasure for the rest.

A scanning of trends reveals little to the quick observation, save that in the period covered the accent was on story and basic idea; incisive dramatic presentation was more important than the oblique and sometimes veiled rendering of a point of view. These are without exception magazine stories, aimed at a magazine public, and that so much artistry has been expended on

some of them is a tribute to the integrity of their writers.

Only with Bester's *FONDLY FAHRENHEIT* and Zelazny's fine *A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES* do we come upon the beginnings of the techniques in evidence during the past few years.

A comparison of these sensuously and intellectually exciting tales with the intuned and often drab *DANGEROUS VISIONS* is revealing. It is easy to see why SFWA members remembered them, and gives one the feeling that the s f short story has gone downhill. (Not so the novel, but that is another argument.)

This is a landmark anthology to place with *ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE*. One awaits the following volumes with a stirring of the old excitement.

Barry Gillam reviews:

A FEW LAST WORDS

by JAMES SALLIS

Macmillan :: 1970
226 pages :: \$4.95

Recently, in commenting on Yasujiro Ozu, the great Japanese director, I wrote that in the last scene of *AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON* Ozu translates autumn and anticipation into winter and instant. This is Ozu's last film and Chishu Ryu has for the last time been separated from his beloved family. Ozu's later pictures, melodramas of family life, have always had their share of separations, but his last films (*LATE AUTUMN*, *THE AUTUMN OF THE KOHAYAGAWA FAMILY* - also known as *THE END OF SUMMER*, and *AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON*), as the titles indicate, deal with final leave-takings. Ozu no longer reminds us, as he did in the final shot of *TOKYO STORY* (a boat toiling up a river), that life goes on, but that a single life inevitably ends. Setsuko Hara is alone at the end of *LATE AUTUMN*, having decided not to remarry; Ganjiro Nakamura is dead at the end of *THE END OF SUMMER*, Ozu's camera resting on the smoke from the crematory chimney and the crows; Chishu Ryu is hopelessly alone when *AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON* closes, having seen his daughter married. Not only does Ozu show us characters bereft, but the old cronies in *LATE AUTUMN* and *AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON* reminisce about Japan as it used to be. They meet old comrades from the war, sing old school songs, and all look rather tired. Ozu himself regrets the changes that accompanied the Americans. *THE END OF SUMMER* opens, after all, with a gaudy neon sign that flashes the words, "The New Japan".

We live in a world that seems to be coming apart, in which rules no longer seem to apply. The reaction may be Ozu's, or Peckinpah's. Sam Peckinpah, a near-great director, dwells in film after brilliant film (*RIDE THE HIGH COUNTRY*, *THE WILD BUNCH*, *THE BALLAD OF CABLE HOGUE*) on the closure of the American frontier. The end of the West traumatises his films. The sight of an automobile is an omen of finality. Most of the protagonists cannot live through this period of change. Something is happening in the world that they cannot understand. It moves ahead of their comprehension. The one way they can perhaps survive, or at least preserve their integrity, is to stick by each other. But they follow this doctrine only when there is nothing left. Thornton tracks his one-time partner, Pike, in *THE WILD BUNCH*, because Pike deserted him earlier. Thornton was incarcerated and his parole depends on his finding and killing Pike. But there it is again: the inescapable separation.

Every one of the seventeen stories in James Sallis' collection has at its centre "the instant of desertion", as Sallis calls it in A FEW LAST WORDS. It takes many forms: a couple must give up their child for adoption (JIM AND MARY G); a singer must leave her dying world so that it may live that much longer, on sufferance of scientists studying it (FACES, HANDS); a pair of American writers in London are left by their mutual girl (FRONT & CENTAUR); the world burns in the final war as Jerry Cornelius watches (JEREMIAD); a new ice age comes upon the world and the last holdouts of a small town prepare to leave for the south (A FEW LAST WORDS).

The forces at work may be natural or human but they all fall into the mode of necessity. The events and circumstances presented or reacted to, or remembered, are irresistible. The "occasions" usually occur in the past; it is too late to act; there is no appeal and one must now adapt. One must change oneself to fit the new world that results. The character in THE HISTORY MAKERS inevitably quotes Yeats: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." The two paintings mentioned are THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY and one of Monet's Rouen Cathedral paintings. In other words, all that is permanent is what has been taken out of the world and out of time. The world itself incessantly changes. The quality of the light as it meets the stone of Notre Dame turns the air and the edifices different tones, different shades, from minute to minute, from season to season. Monet must work on one unfinished canvas after another as the light returns to just the quality of this view or that one.

Davis, the viewpoint character of AND THEN THE DARK -, is a high official in a defence-oriented company. He has been convinced, though, that he must oppose his government's policies and he prepares a statement for the press, afterwards. Two men come in and threaten him. They speak softly, they never become violent. All they leave behind is cigarette ash on the rug. This one disorder takes on the significance of an omen of the coming disorder, of a larger entropy. He realises that he and those who agree with him fight alone and blindly. We fight against a darkness that is everywhere, that will soon rule. When he understands this, Davis loses a world he had imagined existed, a world of light and moral order, a world where he obeyed orders as a matter of course. He now has the burden of thinking for himself.

Sallis places not a few of his protagonists in the same position. They hold within themselves some incipient realisation that they try to suppress. Jerry Cornelius is a walking corpse. His wife and son were killed in a fire - a fire bombing? He can save himself for a while but he does it merely out of reflex. There is nothing to save himself for. The two Jerry Cornelius stories included, though, are among the least effective in the collection. What Sallis does is to tell the stories in the style of the Moorcock episodes, but stripped of most dramatic qualifiers. This understatement supposedly brings out the crises of the characters so much more sharply. It doesn't work, though. All that is left is incident. Sallis gives an enriched narrative, trading on the reader's reactions to conversations held partly in Cajun French and partly in Mandarin. The device doesn't work because Jerry Cornelius himself is a void. The shock of Meursault in Camus' THE OUTSIDER is gone and we have a pale shade.

This is how Sallis seems to defend his stories:

"It's not the effect, but the fact, that one finds intolerable."

"They are there. Inexorable, ineffable, intolerable."

"If such things as facts exist...?"

"The absence of fact, in effect, becomes fact."

Sallis uses the same program in JIM AND MARY G, where the couple see their son for the last time this morning. Jim will take him out. Sallis does not tell us why or exactly where to. The story operates so as to make all the ordinary occurrences poignant because they have become finalities. The child's garbling of speech, his gestures, become precious. And, admirably, Sallis does not explain until the end of the story. We are forced to reread, now with the knowledge of the parents. We read it first from the child's puzzled view: why do his parents act strangely? Yet, even if we grant this technical achievement, the story seems empty. Why? Would it be too easy to say that such a situation needs a greater artist to breathe life into it? We can hardly cavil over the commonness of incident for that is the point. As with so many of these stories, we leave it feeling that the achievement is perhaps a little too studied, that plan takes precedence over the sympathies of the artist.

However, this book contains several splendid stories that you should not pass over: FACES, HANDS, KAZOO, and A FEW LAST WORDS. In FACES, HANDS Sallis successfully substitutes sensual imagery for emotional hyperbole. It consists of two sections, KETTLE OF STARS and THE FLOORS OF HIS HEART. KETTLE OF STARS tells of a meeting in a space station, in transit. Rhea is a singer from Byzantium, a planet named by an earthman, referring to Yeats. It is a chillingly ironic and chillingly appropriate tag, for Byzantium, the planet, is dying. It cannot support its people any longer and has been granted a stay for the loan of a singer, Rhea. The narrator is a diplomat who tries to stop a war. His actions, though, seem to exist in another sphere: "the faces are what matter". In THE FLOORS OF HIS HEART a woman and her telepathic pet minister to a man who is, again, in transit. The sensual pleasures of these stories are among the best effects: colours, textures, sounds, smells; the quality of selective memory.

KAZOO is most likable on first reading, when its very unpredictability and wild humour win the reader over. (Like a middle-period Dylan song: you know that it will rhyme, but you wonder how he can possibly keep up a "narrative" through such outrageously and delightfully nonsensical lyrics.) On second reading the story is still enjoyable but now Sallis cannot hold the story on such poor puns. The whole, though, comes off sounding incredibly like a Kazoo. It's shrill and fast, putting the listener on and having fun and perhaps whoever is playing it should be out doing something serious on a flute or an oboe, but right now we won't think about that. Perhaps it is that very intimation of playing hooky that keeps a certain back-of-the-mind pressure on the story and keeps it from being too slight.

A FEW LAST WORDS is what Compton's THE SILENT MULTITUDE wasn't but ought to have been. It is also what JIM AND MARY G should be but isn't. The last inhabitants of a town finally give in and go south as an apparently permanent cold wave moves down from the north. Sallis finds apt and effective metaphors for this separation, this loneliness amidst the deserted past. One is a moon that the protagonist watches travel through the quadrants of his mullioned window, as he lies awake at night. The moon will still move when he is no longer there to watch. There is also a coffee pot in a restaurant. It will make coffee for twenty or forty but cannot for just two. There is more coffee than people to give it to. When we get to the end of the story and "Is this how it feels, the instant of desertion?" we have experienced it and yes, we know how it feels. Sallis places the stories so that they move from the personal tragedy of JIM AND MARY G through a series of stories about artists and the past, then the Jerry Cornelius apocalypse and finally A FEW LAST WORDS and its seemingly impersonal tragedy.

Certainly, there are a number of other interesting stories; THE HISTORY MAKERS first among them, but this will, I think, suffice. Even if some of the stories are disappointingly empty rhetoric, the collection is well worth reading. Sallis' intelligence is evident everywhere, and that is no small virtue. Intelligence, though, is not the deciding factor in art.

Stanislaw Lem reviews:

ROBBERS OF THE FUTURE

by SAKYO KOMATSU

Mir (Moscow) :: 1970

316 pages

Besides the novel which gives the book its title, this volume contains several short stories by Japanese s f writer Komatsu. As we can see while reading this book, his moral position is impeccable. Komatsu is for humanism, for peace, for the equality of mankind; he is against oppression, war, exploitation, etc. That's all very nice, and indeed commends him to us, especially within the s f field. However, this is insufficient, unless you believe

that such a diagnosis automatically vouches for the literary and scientific qualities of the subject matter. Unfortunately, there is no such automatic correlation in literature.

In THE ABANDONED ONES, the first story of the collection, the children of the whole world put up an ultimatum to the adults - either the adults "improve" the world within the hour, or the children will leave the world, method not specified. This they soon must do, for the adults don't take their ultimatum very seriously. The little ones disappear; even new-born babes vaporise from out of their cradles. The author does not say a word about how they do this, how the babies get the "marching order".

The meaning and value of all the other short stories is similar to the first. According to the author, the world is bad; also it is very bad that it is that bad; it would be much better if the world were better. We needn't waste a second's thought on considering what the so-called adults could have done to stop the catastrophe of their children's departure. Even the best of the stories, THE SMOKE FLOWERS, presents a similar motif. On an alien planet, a sublime form of art exists - the blowing of "smoke flowers". This art verges on the religious. Humans, in their greed, export this art, buy it for bundles of money, and so the art begins to die on Earth as well as on the planet of its birth. Why? Because it is no good, you must agree, to exploit commercially immaterial goods and values, imponderabilia.

At least this story is readable, although even here the author incorporates an ancient motif, a fairy-tale-like naive didacticism. Even if fairy tales contain no intellectual riches, the stylistic excellence of their execution may enchant us, or their lyrical (or gruesome, or grotesque) mood, their grace, etc. However, the style of Komatsu - or, to be careful, that of the Russian translation - is that of a column in the Sunday edition of a newspaper. The author tries to move the human consciousness with a handful of truths which anybody knows by heart, provided he hasn't forgotten what he learned at school, or what the good reverend taught him during scripture lessons. Can you call an author's style graceful if he presents the most naive propositions as if they were newly discovered important truths?

Komatsu's short stories possess at least one virtue that the novel lacks - they are so short that they will barely bore the reader. I cannot claim this

for the novel ROBBERS OF THE FUTURE. It is naive and constructed most primitively. A character from the classical kabuki-plays, called an extra-terrestrial or camouflaged as one, ship-wrecked on earth, creates (starting in Japan) an "acoustic vacuum" (in which all sounds and speech disappear), because he feels that the horrible noise of the big cities assaults him. The author tries to give to this graveyard-like silence, described in many scenes, a now comic, now dramatic, effect (but only for readers other than myself).

Then the miraculous being creates another vacuum, this time not in the sphere of "private affairs", but in order to stop the "evil world". The visitor "paralyses" all types of explosives, from atomic weapons to petrol motors. However this does not involve the mass destruction of the whole world's suddenly frozen cities, for the paralysis does not affect all inflammable materials (for, as I understand the book, the "principle of paralysis" does not affect chemical reactions between coal and oxygen, and so it "eliminates" only dynamite, atomic piles, and petrol motors). Finally the narrator, the mediator who reveals the whole story to us, learns from the wizard that he must make the decision whether the original state of affairs should be restored. Powerless, because he dare not make the decision, the narrator passes on this open question to the reader.

It may well be possible that this novel contains allusions to elements of Japanese folklore with which I'm unfamiliar, and perhaps the book does not have such a stupefying effect on a Japanese reader as it does upon a European who just isn't familiar with the tradition of kabuki plays; and as far as I'm concerned, I'm not familiar with it. In any case, neither the novel nor the short novellas are s f, but fantasy; or rather, they are old stuff, naive parables and allegories, about one inch deep. Today, the mainstream of Japanese writing contains some excellent fiction writers. However, if we may judge from just this one example, its s f is even more of an institution for retarded people than Western s f.

David Penman reviews:

MAGELLAN

by COLIN ANDERSON

Gollancz :: 1970

189 pages :: £1.40

Magellan, a single city of 50 million inhabitants, is a scientific paradise cut off from the war-devastated remainder of the world. Its inhabitants await "liberation" when, transformed into elements of a giant computer, Chronophage, they will each become gods in a world of their own creation.

The protagonist is Euripides Che Fortho July 10701121 or Euri for short, social misfit in a 99.716% stable society. As well as a misfit, he is a rebel and a murderer. He represents the last small pocket of backwardness in the artistically and aesthetically near-perfect Universal Society. Naturally this greatly concerns Bubo, his personal teacher and guide (known officially as a "servant"), who would do anything to help someone unfortunate enough to willingly take a man's life. Obviously, this society which allows Euri to become what he is, owes him a great debt.

Euri gains a chance for remittance when he takes Bubo to see the illegal life and death games fought inside the half-ruined space museum in the old city. Here Euri fights Bubo and kills him, but before he even begins to enjoy the enormous compensation society now owes him, Eternity comes upon them. Which means the end of the city and the first half of the book.

in Magellan, Anderson presents a fine picture of a future society. He shows that it is both entirely logical and yet quite different from our own society. He shows the triumph of the apparent goals of our society, and in the process he questions the values of those goals. The reader can take the city Magellan as a serious study of a practical Utopia, which, incidentally, makes Arthur Clarke's THE CITY AND THE STARS look like a child's construction of building blocks. Also, in this book Anderson debunks the very ideal of Utopia, although we may miss much of the book's value if we look at it so negatively. S f writers create twenty half-baked Utopias every week only so they can annihilate them again, and at the end of these books we see a nice picture of the hero and heroine in each other's arms - and nothing else. Colin Anderson creates more than a mere picture of a stable society which must inevitably be destroyed.

I cannot describe the complexities of the city itself in only a few lines. Even Anderson does not describe it completely. He infers, rather than explains, the enormous scientific advances that affect the everyday lives of the inhabitants. Anderson shows us the "platelets", for instance, objects that seem to float around in streams like rivers, but ignore gravitation. Anderson says that they are a means of transportation, but he says nothing more about their functions. (But then, a book about modern suburban life would only sound tedious if it stopped to describe in detail the internal combustion engine each time a bus roared by.) Anderson mentions, and takes for granted, other facets of everyday life in Magellan, in the same fashion. He successfully gives the impression of enormous and fundamental changes, but without annoying over-writing and shifts of perspective.

The second half of the book tells how Euri wanders through Eternity. The business of being god turns out not as well as everybody expected before liberation. It seems that creation is somewhat limited by the mind of the creator. As Euri travels he finds that people tend to build hells for themselves more often than heavens. As he crosses the sea in pursuit of his wife, Chrys, he comes across a living castle where one man encloses himself against the world, and a white porcelain palace which is really a toilet seat. Anderson writes more of a dream than a real experience, even showing a somewhat startling change in Bubo's character when they meet again (Bubo has been resurrected before liberation). Anderson ends the book reasonably and adds a nicely ironic finishing touch to the book.

For the most part, MAGELLAN is a sound piece of writing. Anderson describes his future society skilfully - in the first 100 pages, he manages to describe a complete society, indicate its failings and show its downfall. However Bubo, Euri, and Chrys are types, not characters, and in this way the book is weakest. The reader can empathise little with the hero of MAGELLAN. Even Bubo, the wise and benevolent mentor, appears as no more than the highest product of his society. Euri's wife, Chrys, is simply a female who happens to be around. This type of Utopian novel would read much better if authors realised that while societies change, people do not; and even under the pressure of millions of years of evolution, they would change into different types of people, not cardboard cut-outs.

I must point out the difficulty in Anderson's idea of Eternity. What exactly does Colin Anderson achieve, apart from the very elaborate destruction of the city? He fulfills the desire for omnipotence that most humans feel from time to time. The incredible dreariness and degeneracy of the godlike state makes a nice comment on the directions of human desire. Perhaps this is Anderson's connecting theme between the two halves: that our aims are impracti-

cal, although our striving after these aims constitutes the height of human achievement.

You might read this book and gain nothing from it. But read it, and arm yourself with half a dozen possible interpretations instead of only one. MARGELLAN gives food for thought.

Ted Pauls reviews:

FURTHEST

by SUZETTE HADEN ELGIN

Ace 25950 :: 1971

191 pages :: 75c

An Ace S F Special

You might think that a novel that features Coyote Jones, an intergalactic intelligence agent speaking twentieth century slang, whose immediate superior is called the Fish who assigns him to a planet called Furthest because it's the furthest out of any inhabited world in mankind's political cosmos...you might think this will be one of those dreadfully infantile attempts at s f "humour", or at very best a Ron Goulart zany pastiche. However, Miss Elgin's book is nothing of the sort. It is a

serious book, built on imposing themes, laced with genuine humour, which deserves its designation as an Ace S F Special. FURTHEST shows an impressive budding (although not yet a full-fledged flowering) of the talent she hinted at in her earlier novel, THE COMMUNIPATHS (to which FURTHEST is a kind of sequel), and the marvellous novelette, FOR THE SAKE OF GRACE, which Terry Carr and Don Wollheim chose as one of their best-of-the-year selections.

On its most superficial level, FURTHEST is a puzzle story. Coyote Jones is dispatched to the planet Furthest to investigate after a check of the data banks of the Galactic Federation (over 20,000 planets strong) reveals that the accumulated information is apparently falsified: according to the data, the people of Furthest are dead average in every respect. Previously the Federation had missed this anomaly, but suddenly they must find out what sort of people these Furthesters are, after a representative from Furthest is scheduled by normal alphabetical rotation to become President of the Tri-Galactic Council. After some difficulty, the Tri-Galactic Intelligence Service manages to plant ace agent Coyote Jones on this world, which shows suspicion and hostility towards outsiders. In his guise of manager of MESH (a sort of super coffee house) Jones sets out to uncover the truth about Furthest. He succeeds, too, and I guarantee that the answer to the puzzle will come as a surprise to even the most imaginative reader.

I don't want to tell you the solution, or even hint at it; any reviewer who does this should be hanged. But I want to mention a number of subsidiary elements which help to make this an exceptional novel (and I can tell you about them without robbing you of any surprise or enjoyment of the book). Jones makes no progress at all towards answering his questions about the Furthesters until his hired native boy convinces the offworlder to shelter his sister, Kh'lllythenna Be'essakred Q'ue (a.k.a. Bess, for obvious reasons), whom the Furthesters have convicted of some unspeakable religious breach and sentenced to mind erasure. She is a mindwife, a telepath trained from childhood to be the mistress of a prominent and deserving Furthest man. Through the absolute intimacy of mind-to-mind contact she can provide overwhelming sexual satisfaction. Jones suffers the pangs of sexual deprivation during his stay on Furthest (because it is one of the few prudish planets in existence; he is therefore compelled to abstain for the only time in his adult life), and Bess per-

forms her telepathic service for him out of compassion. Of course he falls in love with her, discovers the nature of her offence, and eventually learns the secret of this closed society. He reports it to the Galactic Central in such a way that the Furthest society will not be torn apart by sudden exposure to outside influence, and he returns to Bess' planet for what he hopes will be a happy ending.

Elgin draws the two principal characters of FURTHEST very well. We see Bess more clearly, although we also see that Coyote Jones is highly competent, despite such affectations as his name, his overt cynicism, and rock music slang. The individual triumphs over the pulp hack figure. Miss Elgin demonstrates a delicate excellence of narrative, and she can depict alien cultures. In particular she shows this aspect of her skill in the long chapter which consists of a manual for those who train young girls to be mindwives. Suzette Haden Elgin shows so many strengths as a writer in this book that both this reviewer and her many other admirers will eagerly await her later novels.

Meanwhile, get into FURTHEST: it's a worthwhile trip.

Ted Pauls reviews:

THE WARLOCK IN
SPITE OF HIMSELF

by CHRISTOPHER STASHEFF

Ace 87300 :: 1969
75c

THE WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF should delight all those readers who enjoy light sword-and-sorcery, although it is really more science fiction than fantasy, because the author ultimately gives scientific explanations to all the fantastic elements. The central plot is completely s f: the agent of an interplanetary federation comes to a backward planet to manipulate its politics from behind the scenes and so nudge it towards advancement. Other aliens with less noble designs compli-

cate his task. A familiar enough situation. However, in this case the backward culture includes a few decidedly strange elements, like witches, werewolves, elves, and ghosts.

Rodney d'Armand, alias Rod Gallowglass, is an agent for SCENT (Society for the Conversion of Extraterrestrial Nascent Totalitarianisms), which seeks to bring all human inhabited worlds into the federation governed by the DDT (Decentralised Democratic Tribunal). Rod is accompanied to the world of Gramarye by his FCC (Faithful Cybernetic Companion), a robot named Fess who looks like a black stallion and has a faulty capacitor which causes a circuit to kick out during moments of great stress or when he encounters something outside his experience. He is the only epileptic robot in the universe. Gramarye's original colonists were romanticists, their century's equivalent of the Society for the Preservation of Creative Anachronisms. They built a feudal society, dominated by a monarch and twelve great magnates. The presence of a strong strain of psi-powers in the population, plus the peculiar properties of one of the planet's indigenous life-forms (a moss), add witchcraft and sorcery to feudalism to create a classic sword-and-sorcery setting.

Rod lands on the planet, conceals his spaceship, and sets out aboard Fess towards the nearest community. Immediately he begins to analyse and plan to influence Gramaryan politics. Because he carelessly uses a modern piece of equipment and his judo skill, and talks to Fess (Rod speaks aloud; Fess replies via radio receiver implanted in the man's head), Rod quickly acquires a

reputation as a warlock, against which he protests without effect. And for nearly 300 pages "The Warlock In Spite of Himself" goes through a series of adventures while he sorts out the various Gramaryan factions and foils the plot of the other outsiders. Stasheff presents a wonderful lot of complexity and confusion, plus at least three major characters who appear to be on different sides at various times.

Stasheff finally reveals the basic conflict: that the DDT needs the telepathic "witches" of Gramarye because the federation has become so widespread that eventually it will require telepathic communication in order to continue effective democratic government. The other outsiders, who lead a plot to eliminate the young Gramaryan queen (who protects and aids the witches), are enemies of the DDT. Stasheff does not present much of a premise upon which to support a long novel, especially because none of the events are believable. For instance, given time-travel, we cannot see why the anti-DDT faction would embark on such an overwhelmingly complicated and problematical course as the delicate manipulation of feudal politics, when they can achieve their objectives with so many more direct, simple, and certain methods. (They can simply travel back to the time when the colonists first landed on Gramarye and blast their ship from the sky, which would nip the whole book in the bud).

However, Stasheff does not primarily depend on the reader's belief, or even his interest in the main plot, which really does not occupy more than a few pages. Stasheff concentrates mainly on the adventures of the people on this planet, and not the reason why. He does not give reality to the "conflict" between the democratic principles of the DDT and the totalitarianism of his opponents, or to the psionic basis of Gramaryan witchcraft; but he does give importance to Gramarye itself, and its people. Stasheff portrays well a medieval society with its fantasy elements - the book's "atmosphere" reminds me quite strongly of Poul Anderson's THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS - and he gives his society a fascinating assortment of characters. The author writes all dialogue in the "classical" form usual for books of this sort, and he uses it both consistently and beautifully - for instance, in this passage where one of the characters talks about the queen:

Brom turned away, shrugging. "What need to say it? She loved him, of course; what woman would not? He knew not what a woman was for and I'll swear it, and neither did she; but it may be that together, they learned; you may be sure that they had golden chances."

He shook his head, scowling. "If 'twas so, 'twas the crown of the last days of her youth; for it was that spring that her father died, and the sceptre was set in her hands."

The author writes superbly throughout the book. He presents many scenes that will remain in the reader's memory for some time: Rod's wrestling bout with the dwarf Brom O'Berin, the imperious performance of the Queen at a council meeting, Rod's encounter with the ghosts of Castle Loguire, the death of Big Tom, Tuan Loguire's second rabble-rousing speech to the beggars and thieves.

Much of the humour in THE WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF comes from the offbeat attitude of Rod, surely one of the most believable and most likeable characters in s f for some time, and his exchanges with Fess. For example, during the encounter with the ghosts in a deserted wing of Castle Loguire:

Through the moiling panic of his brain fought a single thought:

Fess didn't believe in ghosts.

"Ghosts!" Rod screamed. "Ghosts, Fess, ghosts!"

"Ghosts," droned the robot, "are immaterial, even if they did exist. They are manifestations of neither energy nor matter, incapable of causing damage to a material being."

"Tell them! Tell them!" Rod shrieked.

And later, after he overcomes his fear of the ghosts (with Fess's assistance) and discusses various matters with their leader, the spirit of the first Duke Loguire:

"Leave me now," said the ghost, tall and regal beside him, "and go to your duty. Yet remember, Man, your oath; and be assured that if ever you should lay it aside, the first Duke Loguire shall ever stand beside your bed until at last you yield to fear."

"Definitely a comforting thought," Rod mused. He groped his way down the moss-grown steps, humming YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE.

Buy THE WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF for one of the most engaging, enjoyable, books you will read in some time.

Alf van der Poorten reviews:

NIGHTFALL: 20 S F STORIES

by ISAAC ASIMOV

Rapp & Whiting :: 1970

343 pages :: £1.75

As Isaac Asimov admits himself in the introduction to one of his stories, he is no stylist. Indeed, his writing style shows such a flatness that this collection is not altogether satisfying. Nevertheless it would be churlish indeed to deny Asimov's greatness (and I use the word advisedly) as a science fiction author. The stories in this volume span Asimov's career, but not surprisingly there is very little difference between two stories

written twenty years apart. Therefore I didn't find it altogether a satisfying experience to read all twenty stories at one sitting, although each individual story deserves praise. Too many of these stories depend for their impact on a final punch-line. Therefore a quick reading becomes a succession of punch-lines; rather like reading a whole book of jokes at a sitting.

Then why do I attribute "greatness" to Asimov? Mainly because Asimov writes the sort of s f that first led me to become interested in the genre, and keeps up my interest. They are stories which are both entertaining and also supply ideas and insights which increase one's vision and education. I have never been tempted into the error of believing that science fiction ideas comprise an education, but they may valuably augment an education. To admit this is no different from agreeing that mainstream literature often provides valuable insights into character and personal relationships. A significant proportion a casual science fiction readers, as well as fans, get their first contacts with true typical s f through Asimov's stories (after, perhaps, a taste of Wyndham). Therefore Asimov deserves a sympathetic reading, with the proviso that Asimov's stylistic failures encouraged a generation of s f non-stylists.

According to the introduction, these twenty s f stories have not previously appeared in previous collections of Asimov stories. In no way do they constitute a collection of Asimov's best. Indeed some are disappointing, although others are excellent. Unfortunately the regular reader of British editions of Asimov will have already met the better stories in various anthologies from Panther and elsewhere. Although I haven't read any magazines since the fifties I found that I had already read half the stories, including all the longer ones. (Three of the four stories of NEL'S THROUGH A GLASS, CLEARLY (1967) appear in NIGHTFALL).

My recommendation is therefore to keep NIGHTFALL as a bedside book, and read a few stories each evening. NIGHTFALL and BREEDS THERE A MAN..? are excellent, C-CHUTE, WHAT IF -, FLIES, NOBODY HERE BUT -, IT'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY, and WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE? are very good, while the remaining stories range from good down to so-so. . Although my judgments are very subjective, I might note that any collection, half of whose contents are at least very good, is not to be sneezed at. I was disappointed in the book as a whole because I probably expected too much.

Alf van der Poorten reviews:

SATAN'S WORLD

by POUL ANDERSON

Gollancz :: 1970

204 pages :: £1.40.

This is "a new science fiction novel featuring Nicholas van Rijn and David Falkayn." "Competently written" and "smooth flowing" are fair comments to make about a book which does not pretend to be other than space opera. Satisfied readers of TRADER TO THE STARS and THE TROUBLE TWISTERS, which contain previous stories about the heroes of SATAN'S WORLD, should keep ready their 80 cents for the appearance of the paperback. I cannot say more of a

book whose only aim is to entertain for an hour or so (or more, if you are a slow reader) and which contains no absurdities or gross stylistic inadequacies to prevent this aim.

However, SATAN'S WORLD contains several inadequacies which stop it from being anything more than a pleasant time-occupier. Therefore Anderson's aliens are not aliens at all - they are simply humans in strange skins and shapes. This book's most alien creatures are the human slaves of the evil Shenna. The central plot is weak - van Rijn and Falkayn hope to gain great riches after Falkayn receives information about a rogue planet which will pass by Beta Crucis, temporarily melt, and gain an atmosphere. Normal planets cannot use extensive transmutation plants, but now this huge source of energy can provide fuel for transmutation.

Unfortunately, the alien race, the Shenna, although apparently parasites on a previous civilisation and essentially non-industrialised, want the planet for some unexplained purpose of their own. Anderson does not explain why the computer of Shenna-controlled Serendipity Ltd first reveals the rogue's existence to Falkayn before it tells it to its owners; probably because Anderson could not have written this story otherwise. The rogue planet is named Satan (in order to provide an interesting title for the book?), although it shows little satanism, except when it provides a storm to destroy seventeen robot spaceships chasing Falkayn. Ah, the ingenuity of it all! (and the ingenuousness). However, the reader only sees these things if he gives the book more thought than a space opera deserves. Perhaps 80 cents is a more sensible price to pay for SATAN'S WORLD.

PERRY A CHAPDELAINE Reverse Racism

In 1960, after I had taught for four years at an all-black university, I submitted 37,000 words of testimony to the United States Attorney's Office, entitled WHITE SUPPORTED BLACK RACISM. This testimony was the culmination of my two year's attempts to administer a half million dollar National Assisted Foundation grant given for developmental work in Computer Assisted Instruction.

The first page of my testimony said, "God! What mazes establishments design, to guide the truth and blind the mind."

The next page, a Table of Contents, listed the following chapter headings: I: "...Head N---- in the cotton-patch...", II: "What makes you think a white man can do it?", III: " - Aren't you castrating me?", IV: "Don't you ever curse out my secretaries again!", V: "We hereby resolve that the Tennessee Governor should appoint only a black president!", VI: "Thank you for getting this magnificent grant, Mr Chapdelaine."

There it is: sarcasm, irony, pathos, fear, ridicule, charges, resolutions... and I lived it for five years, including this year. I know reverse racism - five long, gut twisting, mind exhausting years.

When I joined my first faculty meeting on that hot September day in 1966, I knew its faculty, staff, and students were predominantly black. I was also innocently unaware of its deep propensity toward black racism, which I believe is not only the result of some fifty-eight years of white supremacy policies within the Tennessee state political structure, but is also the result of a deeply entrenched black power structure at Tennessee State University.

There are other pinions, such as nepotism and inbreeding, which mesh with black entrenchment. However, these factors have been sufficiently well-discussed in THE AMERICAN NEGRO COLLEGE, by C Jencks and B Riesman. In that article they adequately exposed most of the forces that act upon these vestigial universities.

So the testimony I submitted to the United States Attorney's office did not plead for a review of the plight and status of the American Negro College today. Rather, it was a personal witness to discrimination in reverse, where a creaky political structure joins with liberal theoreticians sprinkled in key

positions of the educational system or communications media to permit wrongs done by blacks.

My personal testimony showed the black racism exhibited by a totally black power structure that consisted of black individuals who also pride themselves on their unique abilities to prepare their almost one hundred per cent black student body for an integrated society, and on their dedication to the fundamentals of the American system with its penchant for due process, and equitable justice for all, regardless of race, colour, or creed. It is a power structure which, although black, is almost wholly supported by a white political system.

My personal experiences began on the day that I joined the large, almost all-black faculty group in the Physics and Mathematics auditorium. It was hot at least ten degrees warmer than was comfortable for me - and excitement throbbed through the seated group as old friends greeted each other and new friends met. There were pressed suit-coats, stiff white collars, and knotted ties for the men. The ladies were fleshed out brightly in a variety of dignified rainbow hued dresses or dress suits, newly purchased or nearly pressed.

My seat was half way back, in the middle, and friendly strangers surrounded me.

"Pardon me - aren't you Mr Chapdelaine?" The lady at my right had turned and smiled.

"Yes." I smiled too. "And you - ?"

She introduced herself, and said, "We've talked on the phone when you taught my son at Father Ryan High School last year."

Thus began my first acquaintance with a member of the primarily black staff at Tennessee State University, then named Tennessee A & I State University, a land grant institution established in 1912 as the Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School in Nashville, Tennessee, and ever after devoted chiefly to education of the Negro on a segregated basis.

It was sometime during the first conversation when one of the ladies turned to another and said, "Oh - when he finds out what this place is like - ."

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I would require much more than 37,000 words to tell all that happened during the next five years; litigation is pending as of this writing; my 200,000 word manuscript entitled HOT BUTTERED SOUL!, which fictionalises the whole experience, nears completion. Nobody would believe the truth, openly told; or, if somebody did believe it, he would ignore it because he wasn't personally involved.

** **

Social institutions and organisations, like people, may conceal unrecognised motions and patterns and fading shadows of desires...

We pride ourselves on moon flights that possibly satisfy ancient dreams that came with the darkness of night when our carefully nurtured camp fires slowly died. And we point casually to the conversion of energy to matter and back.

again, as though this Godlike act also permitted us to choose with impunity the applications of this energy. The bastions of social and sexual prudery are falling, and so are family and religious traditions. Some say Armageddon has come; others say that man's greatest creative period is foreshadowed.

Yet, despite all the stir in our affairs and attitudes, how rigid remains the black-white relationship! Many events, people, institutions, and organizations in HOT BUTTERED SOUL! are based on history, public record, and personal experience. There are persons alive who took part in events similar to those described. Yet for all this I must disclaim the book's truth, and warn those who see themselves in it that they are mistaken. Except for Stokely Carmichael, Martin Luther King, and several other minor characters, all are the complete creation of the author.

WHITE SUPPORTED BLACK RACISM!, though perhaps a more accurate title, sounded too sterile, too definitive. I reasoned that, "What can be more useless to our modern society than an all-black university?", so I played with the title THE APPENDIX UNIVERSITY. Certainly an institution with no more legal right to exist than an all-white school is like an appendix. But how many readers know that the appendix comes unavoidably at birth as a useless extension of our guts, is sometimes prone to disease, and frequently kills the whole body upon which it feeds?

HOT BUTTERED SOUL! names the story beautifully. I want the reader to feel some of the emotion involved when a vestigial institution uses black humans to degrade other black people, and whites stand along the sidelines to boost the game.

John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR (Doubleday / Ballantine) provided the form for HOT BUTTERED SOUL! In a mosaic pattern of prose, he tells of a future over-populated earth. Inside the reader's mind he structures a vaster society than he could have if he had used the straight narrative form. Hopefully I can blend complex interactions within your mind from similar tiny flickers that cover four successive years at Tenkelsipia A & I State University, in the state of Tenkelsipia.

Suppose you are alone on a totally alien planet, and you've been asked to describe earth. How would you begin? What would you say? Where would you end? Would you tell about your life, dashing from the moment of birth, upward?

- Then what of the invention of television, the horseless carriage, the impact of technology upon human groups, invention of the noisy, flushing toilet, dictators and rulers, winos and cop-outs, the sweet scent of honeysuckle along a fence row, politics here and across the seas, what people think - especially those who think differently from you - why the oceans are curdling with poisons, why the skies are burdened with unnatural gases, the startling discovery of a whole new ecological niche in the fleecy white skies above, what your parents were like, what your children are like, and about the Easter Bunny and the man for whom the Christmas feast was named - .

The problem is not, "What should I describe?" but "What should I leave out? An all-black school, Tenkelsipia A & I State University, is a miniature cosmos, rich, variegated, like a whole world. It's possible that graffiti on the shit-house wall can communicate as much reality separately and equally as can its curia-captured presidents, Ravel White and Gerald Gladhand.

Some characters, like Dr Ginger Blastoff and her sister Opal, are simply lonely, sick; black people in authoritative positions too great for their training and abilities; there are poorly understood pressures that moulded and placed them there.

Black students at an all-black institution are apathetic bums, too lazy to spell freedom, not to mention fighting for its practice; there is also a desperation in their resigned approach to education and their heart-felt struggle to gain a degree, with all of its mythical or over-played opportunities.

All-black instructors in an all-black institution are little sand-footed gods who demand stiff obeisance within territorial imperatives, but in their hearts and minds they struggle like a prayer wheel to solve their people's bondage.

White do-gooders are simply nice, mis-aligned pure-souls who behave stupidly with no vision; yet there are some do-gooders who are white.

Community leaders, of course, are grasping money-grubbers; but look behind them at their true supporters, those newly evolved common men designed especially to survive the complexities of modern civilisation - the hypocrites.

An institution, particularly a black one designed to "satisfy the n----, just so they keep their proper place", undergoes a complex history of interactions. Is there any doubt that racism underlies American culture?

Many ultra-liberals say that whites caused a deep hatred of blacks for whites, but I think that "oppression corrupts both the oppressed and the oppressor" is a better epigram. By now, except perhaps on television, the media has accurately described the many ugly features of Negro life. Racists still use the symptoms to justify continued segregation and paternalism.

It is said that "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." I haven't put HOT BUTTERED SOUL! together simply for the racist. He's welcome to read it, of course, but I suggest that Jencks' and Riesman's article, THE AMERICAN NEGRO COLLEGE (already referred to), will give him a definitive treatment of my thesis. The Harvard study, by the way, has raised the ire of both blacks and whites, and I can personally testify that I heard one black president, speaking to the assembled black faculty, curse out the findings and conclusions and declare its falsehoods, even as all the statistics of the college confirmed Jencks and Riesman.

One of my black teaching peers declares there are no such things as black public universities. Though filled with black administrators, faculty, staff, and students, he asserts that our institution is culturally a white school. Also you can see that for most Negroes, white is right, when one looks at hair styles, preferred skin colour, the direction in which desegregation moves, over-all ideology, and choice of brand names. "Their own" society has a dark-to-light pecking order, with the lightest on top.

Those few Negroes who have crossed colour barriers somehow can't influence their former brothers and sisters, even if they want to. Those few Negroes who reach job security and affluence, like their white counter-parts, also remove themselves from their old slum communities, to become more bourgeois in outlook, although still unassimilated into the national upper middle class, as happened to immigrants of other nationalities.

So, where John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR is about a frightening future in

the making now, HOT BUTTERED SOUL! is about a frightening past in the making now.

In history, the powerful white southern sheriff, with his white deputies, and the white plantation owners, with their hired white supervisors, dominated all blacks, including the "head-n-----in-the-cotton-patch", the man they trusted to keep his people in line at all times. White school boards designed the indirect rule through Negro principals, parallel to the "head n-----..." approach. At the same time assemblies, freedom of speech, and due process procedures were often forcibly discouraged. One outstanding exception occurred when the Negroes were given permission to worship in white-patterned churches, to a white-patterned god, where eventually the Negro minister sometimes mediated between black and white rulers.

Negroes who were taught that white was right confronted a new ideology when they moved North where they found exploitation ruled by ethnic politics and powerful forces, and the Negro learned to act white, but to stay in his place, his ghetto, and his position in life.

Eventually, and only in very recent times, the whole community, supported by the mass media and partisan federal politics, found it fashionable to support integration - or, perhaps more meaningfully, to fight segregation - and early in the 1960s Federal Judiciary decisions had their effect and a large mass movement began.

At the same time, southern agriculture, at last being mechanised, made untrained, illiterate, cheaply priced Negro hands more of a liability than an asset for white farmers. Well over ten million Negroes drifted to larger cities or to the urban north. In the letter of the law they became equal citizens, although they were still not social and economic equals. All federal, state, and local efforts to the contrary, at this writing, the physical isolation of the Negro in all-Negro schools is increasing, not decreasing, while other kinds of segregation are dying (i.e. television commercials include Negroes, television programs proliferate with blacks, police departments are slowly increasing their black memberships, and blacks are swiftly gaining the vote).

Some sociologists assert that old-style segregation is everywhere dying while class segregation, based on income, is increasing. According to HISTORICAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES, Washington D C, 1957, the lowest twenty per cent of income-earning families have had only four or five per cent of all income as long as statistics have been kept. In a nation of increasing wealth, these figures show an apparently hidden and extremely rigid set of class barriers.

Everyone knows that Negroes have visibility, unlike other ethnic groups that our mainstream has absorbed. Unfortunately some of us are bound by myths as old and as vague as the Easter Bunny, the Stork, Santa Claus, or the belief that America is a civilised, peaceful land with genuine concern and opportunity for all. However, we still falsely believe that no matter how far removed the ancestry or how mixed the genes from various ethnic groups, a man is either white or black, with all the consequent intellectual, physical, and moral implications.

Such an either-or, two-valued position is just as wrong as arguing that all flowers everywhere in the world are either pure yellow or pure white, with no intermediate shades or colours permitted.

Yet some prestigious scientists, and their scientific establishments, now take the opposite view, which is just as silly, based on equally blind emotions, that since we may stir up trouble if we discover genuine inheritable differences between "black" and "white", we shall bury the issue until the world has become an emotionally safer place. Shades of Copernicus! What if we could solve the emotional turmoil by directly finding and acknowledging those differences? The hidden assumption of otherwise astute scientists is as bigoted as the premises of the Ku Klux Klan, for they assume that research will show that blacks are "inferior".

God! I hope Amerika (as the underground press now call us) never descends so low that scientists cannot reason for fear of finding differences, or, as extremists would have it, that differences become so huckstered that America polarises into two colonies, one "white" and the other "black".

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Over two hundred private Negro colleges were founded before 1900, usually with no resources and little judgment. By 1900 only half were afloat. Dozens of trained clergymen, many by default, became teachers' colleges. Although white philanthropists financed them and white boards controlled them, the change to all-black administrations did little to change their orientation psychologically and culturally, probably because the blacks had to dress in acceptable behaviour modes in order to reach a position of trust with white controllers. It's doubtful, though, that the creation of what we call Uncle Toms was deliberate within the white community. More often than not, in the very early days, the whites thought the Negroes had lower limits than they did, and therefore they gave them separate schools to cater for these presumed lower limits.

Another very important factor that shaped the all-black school was the fact that it could not survive in the segregated south without the tolerance of local white supremacists. Thus it made little difference in the long run whether the school was run by black or white men.

During one Negro University President's speech, he laughed as he said, "Don't tell us to send our better black graduates and we'll accept them in our industries or schools. I've got news for you! This kind is all there is! There ain't no other kind!" And, of course, he referred to the fact that virtually all black students who enter all-black universities are sadly, grossly, under-prepared, whether they come from the north, east, south, or west; also he referred to the fact that Negroes still generally have only two real career choices, hard physical labour, or a college degree. If they have the latter they hope they will be acceptable for at least an office job of some kind. The trades, usually representing white controlled closed union shops, siphon off very few of these ambitious black students compared with the case of equally trained and motivated white students.

A poorly educated Negro instructor or administrator may have been "given" his or her advanced degree from liberal northern schools many years ago when certain institutions wanted a progressive image. When such blacks lose their positions they cannot get similar employment from other black institutions, they are ill-prepared to compete in the general professional and technical market, and they are unable to gain anything other than that employment common to those without high degrees. Most black members tend to follow party lines handed down by presidents far more rigidly than would instructors at equivalent white institutions; this applies in particular to those who are underre-

educated or fearful. The fearful tend to stay longer and also tend to fill administrative positions from where power flows.

Boards of Education in states that have all-black state schools tend to hire only the safe, congenial instructors rather than the controversial ones. Of course this is true for white schools as well, but at a different quantitative level.

Administrators of all-black schools (where "local" means the white community at large) have always been able to eliminate those who "don't fit in", or "don't understand the local situation", more easily than at other colleges. Often the blacks are given directions to rid themselves of a troublesome liberal, but to do it in such a way that the blacks themselves take the blame.

Every southern and border state has had one publicly controlled Negro college or more. Some, like the private schools, were established to train teachers, or to satisfy separate-but-equal Federal requirements after 1890. Most states with a significant black population chose this latter alternative, and usually set up all-black A & Ts or A & Is, as land-grants, to become eligible for Federal support. At the beginning of this century, seventeen states had separate land-grant colleges for Negroes. Most of them, unfortunately, moved very little toward public service and practical involvement in the affairs of the surrounding community.

In part, white state legislatures caused this situation. As they exercised effective control over the black institutions, they viewed them from the start as an inferior facility designed primarily to keep masses of blacks satisfied under the law. Negro educators did not even demand services on a par with those offered by next-door white land-grant schools. Instead, they usually bought W E B DuBois' thesis that blacks should have an education as non-utilitarian as that given to able whites. The visitor who comes from a white northern campus to an all-white southern land-grant campus is often struck by the narrow, classical, campus-oriented view of responsibilities that prevails. Again this shows that the all-black school problem is not only racial, but southern.

For various political reasons, all-black state land grant colleges became mostly teachers' colleges. By 1917 there were some thirty public Negro institutions in the south and border states, plus one in Pennsylvania and one in Ohio. Additions since then have been mostly marginal junior colleges which, under the effect of recent court rules, the dominant white structure finally absorbed. One character based on reality who appears in *HOT BUTTERED SOUL!* is John Farrish, who came from one of these formerly segregated Florida schools; every reader will be able to see the effect of his personality in that complex situation.

As my black militant friend has pointed out, black schools were founded and run by whites and they are still run by whites. Black leaders in these institutions defer to white politicians and legislators. They do not try to promote a distinctive set of habits and values in their students; in many ways they do not fight to preserve a separate sub-culture, as did other ethnic colleges. In some places attitudes are so bad that administrators treated anything different about Negroes, such as their ability to grow beautiful rounded, bushy-black hair, as inferior. Some black instructors even today clip short their own children's hair and ridicule them for wanting something that is most natural to their biology.

There would be little chance that administrators would carry out the alternate choice - to prepare blacks for revolution against a hostile society. Not only would this be self-defeating for every black administrator, but it would counter the survival of every student. Torn between these over-simplified poles, the new breed of young Negro looks with contempt on those who found it convenient to maintain their own hypocrisy simultaneously with self-contempt for so many years.

If we take account of all these forces, it becomes easy to caricature an all-black education with its authoritarian atmosphere, intervening white power structure, domineering but rabbit-scared president who tyrannises the faculty who tyrannise the students, the tendency of the persecuted to imitate the oppressors, the emphasis on athletics, fraternities, and sororities, the pretentiousness and ballooning of white academic forms without also carrying along the substance...

...It is easy to lampoon the Negro, to show how such pressures make him seem like a black imbecile.

But how much more does this say about my white peers? - those who not only founded the all-black institution and now sustain it, but who walk the streets today, permitting it to continue?

The all-black school has been the chief instrument for selecting black leaders who are prominent today. These same colleges have sifted out the creative and rebellious, those very people most capable of making peaceful change. In the long view, who gains most injustice from this? The black people? Or the white people, now faced with a growing rebellion from every colour?

In HOT BUTTERED SOUL! I've shown how screening devices work, and why. You would see that perhaps more than in similar white institutions, corruption eats into everyone's hearts; one student willingly trades sexual privileges for grades just as easily as another instructor might ask for his car to be washed, or his lawn mowed; you would see how the black group looks sceptically at local white-controlled newspapers, or the so-called protective forces of society, the police and state guard; you would see that rumours of black presidents stealing from school funds are true, but so are rumours that whites set it up that way; you would see that despite everything - corruption, suppression, rampant deceptions - student hopes and human dignity struggle to emerge.

Whether or not someone more skilled than I tells how blacks feed on blacks and whites on the remains, few would care to show how segregation is not only an exceedingly complex problem, with too many influencing and interacting levels, but that no one can rest a saint during the constant fight for human dignity.

FOOTNOTE

- 1 THE AMERICAN NEGRO COLLEGE, C Jencks and B Riesman, THE HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, Volume 37, Winter 1967, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, pages 3 - 60.

- Perry A Chapdelaine 1971

GEORGE TURNER

One Cheer for Australian S F

GEORGE TURNER discusses:

THE PACIFIC BOOK
OF AUSTRALIAN S F

edited by JOHN BAXTER,

Pacific Books 92 :: 1968
180 pages :: \$1

also released by
Angus & Robertson as
THE PACIFIC BOOK
OF SCIENCE FICTION

THE SECOND PACIFIC BOOK
OF AUSTRALIAN S F

edited by JOHN BAXTER

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(George Turner's review of the first PACIFIC BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN S F appeared originally in S F COMMENTARY No 1, January 1969, in a slightly longer version.)

I. THE PACIFIC BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN S F is a dull book, but I propose to rat thoroughly on my principles and examine it in detail, not as an entertainment but as an investigation of how and why the local product falls short of even average quality. And if this takes me beyond the accepted province of a review I merely snarl and say, "I'm gunna do it, anyway".

With one exception, there is nothing wrong with the conceptions of the stories gathered here; eleven of the twelve could have been written into perfectly acceptable items of modern s f. The question is: Why weren't they?

The failures are of technique. And that is a literary problem.

Kit Denton's BURNING SPEAR is satisfactorily done within the limits he sets himself, but the limits are too narrow. It is one of those little mood pieces which everyone likes to do once in a while, even if only to use up an idea which refuses to jell into a rounded whole, but this one is too insubstantial to evoke response other than a question mark. It ends in midair because there is no solid ground to support it. The failure is one of visualisation, and the soap opera dialogue helps not at all.

Frank Roberts' IT COULD BE YOU is one of those essays in the macabre which fail not for lack of craft but for lack of constraint. He launches what purports to be (if we are to take John Baxter's foreword as correct) an attack on the excesses of TV participation games. In fact he presents a savagely exaggerated assault on human nature, showing his players as barbaric primitives who will stick at nothing in their hysterical greed for money. And "nothing" includes the public murder of the loser, even if winner and loser should be husband and wife. The reader simply doesn't believe him; the satire is vitiated by the overstatement. The writing is competent but the treatment is not. What Roberts had was a happily spiteful comedy of contemporary pre-occupations - dressing it up as grand guignol took the bite out of it.

Lee Harding's THE EVIDENCE is a failure of technique, plus a failure to appreciate the principle underlying the suspense story. He has attempted something for which he has not (or at that time had not) the equipment to grapple. The theme is guilt and ultimate judgment - an enormous theme which must either be examined at length or presented in a single effective facet as anecdote. (Anecdotes should be studied by all of us; many are literary masterpieces expressed with utter economy. Take, for instance, that famous sick joke: "But, apart from all that, Mrs Lincoln, did you enjoy the play?" That one line contains a world of comment and implication. And in the one line the story is complete). Lee struck a middle course and tried to flesh out his anecdote with a suspenseful build-up; it did not come off because a major element of the suspense story was missing. One wondered satisfactorily, and then kept on wondering with a sense of mounting irritation because one was being told nothing; there were none of those tiny indications of solution which titillate without revealing. One did not feel the menace of his Watcher; one was told that he menaced the protagonist, but he should have menaced the reader as well. I could not avoid a feeling of: "For God's sake, Lee, get on with it". And at the end I did not care as I should have done because the shock was one we have suffered too often before.

Of Martin Loran's AN OUNCE OF DISSENSION John Boxter remarks, "The fact that this story appeared in the top-paying and world's top-ranking s f magazine indicates that, as a story at least, it came off." Since the magazine was the often semi-literate ANALOG, the value of the puff is questionable. Well, there is little wrong with the writing as such; it is middle-of-the-road s f aimed at a definite editor and competent for its target, which means that it is one of thousands like it. It is, alas, couched in that aren't-I-the-clever-one style which disfigures so much of the work of Eric Frank Russell; it is, in fact, a typical Russell story. The clever Terrestrial outwits the silly local yokels. The error here is a lack of literary tact. But it was written for a specific market notable for the lack. One would like to see what the "Martin Loran" team can do with a less chi-chi type of tale.

Colin Free's THE WEATHER IN THE UNDERWORLD is utterly competent. Free is a stylish writer, but his talent is wasted on this doom-laden piece of conventional dreaming about an unlikely future, unredeemed by an ending which is conventionally grisly without illuminating anything. But there was nothing to illuminate. The nightmare future has to be very original indeed to stir our hackles these days, and must, to achieve anything, relate to ourselves rather than to figures in an artificial milieu. This one does not relate. The failure is in the mediocrity of the conception, and talent can do little about that.

Damien Broderick is (to judge from a very slight acquaintance) a sensitive and thoughtful man, and Baxter's description of his work as "...undisciplined, ac-

ccentric, gloriously individual..." This combination of characteristics can produce pyrotechnics; why, then, does ALL MY YESTERDAYS fail? The clue lies in that word "undisciplined", by which Baxter probably inferred free-wheeling and outre, but which too often turns out to mean merely slipshod. In connection with this story, that is what it means. Baxter also writes "...if he had more patience with the medium..." Whether he intends "medium" to stand for s f, or prose in general, I cannot decide from the context, but that he says it at all reveals his doubts. The story reads like the work of a man who has dashed off a yarn and mailed it at once, without revision or any real care for the result. The style is not internally consistent and does not always match the mood of the story - particularly in the final tag line. The neat flash of insight is too often marred by cliché expression, robbing it of force. Baxter claims that it contains satire on "...immortality, religion, and psychiatry". So it does, in an offhand way, and perhaps these were, in Broderick's mind, the raison d'être of the piece. But they are incidental, decorative but not forceful, and not really integrated into the total conception of the story. In the short story all the elements must come to climax at once, or the ending becomes tagged on to round off the work. That is what it becomes here, and the tag line misses its effect by being too patently thrown away. The thrown-away line is difficult to bring off; ask any playwright. The failure probably lies in Baxter's deadly reference, "...if he had more patience with the medium..." Broderick is careless to the point of being contemptuous of it and that is no way to write. Yet the tale has its incidental values, and he could write well if he set himself to it, but the dashed-off first sketch rouses impatience in any craftsman.

FOR MEN MUST WORK by Frank G Bryning, is a conventional tale by a competent, conventional writer. It might have impressed us in 1935, when this sort of thing was being done ad nauseum. There is little wrong with it as magazine fiction; it simply has nothing to say to us.

Stephen Cook's FINAL FLOWER is less a story than another mood piece which does not come off. In writing it he fell for the old trap of using evocative words instead of evocative method - "coruscating", "sulphurous slopes" "sheer beauty", and so on. It doesn't work and never did, because the essential visualisation is not communicated. What, for instance, is "sneer beauty"? It is a doubtful adjective miscoupled with an abstract noun, and conveys nothing at all. Nevertheless the tale shows promise of better things, and it is a pity to discover that Stephen Cook is dead.

BEACH, John Baxter's own contribution, is yet another mood piece and is, expectably, the most literate item in the book. Over-written, certainly, but in the mood piece this is not always a fault. It is, however, too long for its content. 4000 words is 2000 too many for the slender theme. It is probably experimental (we all try this sort of thing sooner or later) but only a master craftsman can do it successfully, and Baxter is not that. But let us blame no man for striving beyond his reach; it is a necessary experience in the art. When he succeeds, we applaud fast enough.

Bertram Chandler's ALL LACED UP is the most successful story in the collection, in that Chandler has been content to do what he knows he can do well. He is at all times an unpretentious writer who stays within his limits and rarely turns out a failure. This is backbone s f, the solid and unspectacular work which forms the springboard from which the more adventurous launch their flights. Without the Chandlers to hold the s f line the Sturgeons and Aldisses and Delanys might never have been heard of.

Ron Smith's STRONG ATTRACTION is for me the one story which fails because of its unacceptable theme, miscegenation between unrelated species. The writing is competent without being notable, but I simply cannot visualise a reptiloid species being sexually interested in human women, and Smith makes only an unsatisfactory token attempt to justify it. Such an occasional match can be thought of as a unique moment of perversion, but on the racial scale it becomes intolerable. Disbelief is not suspended.

THERE IS A CROOKED MAN, by Jack Wodhams, appeared in a 1967 ANALOG and is plainly tailored for that market. It has a good, if unoriginal, basic idea, but the twist is predictable before we are halfway through. It has any number of individually amusing gimmicks, but is related in a deliberately fragmented style which is intended to give pace but in fact succeeds in being a strain on the memory; one is forever fitting the bits into position. It is too long for its slender premise. And the dialogue is appalling.

All this adds up to a very poor collection, considered as entertainment, but was worth publishing if only to hold the mirror to the deficiencies of the local scene. There is much promise here, but little fulfillment. One cannot doubt that, of the twelve, Harding, Free, Broderick, Baxter and Smith have the stuff of literature in them, but they are showering promise on arty bric-a-brac. Material has to be strong before the artists can attack it with the powerful weapon of words; the day of the arty trifle is over, thank God. It was once recommended that the young writer cut his teeth on such things, and forgetfulness is full of the stuff. Form and gracefulness are no longer enough to win the plaudits of even the lunatic fringe of languishing worshippers, and subtlety for its own sake evokes only impatience. The literary scene is alive with intellectual muscle wedded to solid craftsmanship, and only the determinedly strong survive on better than mediocre levels.

II "To have edited one collection, as Lady Bracknell might have said, is understandable, but to edit a second looks like sheer insanity."

Thus John Baxter in his introduction to THE SECOND PACIFIC BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN S F; he goes on to give reasons for Lady Bracknell's hypothetical remark. Playing her role, I would have gone on to note (though in more Wildian accents) that the first was so utterly bad as to discourage anyone from reinforcing lunacy.

After which: My hat off to John Baxter for making the unholy attempt and for bringing it off with success and even a certain flair. THE SECOND PACIFIC BOOK is streets and highways ahead of the disgraceful first. Admittedly authors have rendered his task easier by improving their work in the interim, but editorially he has added cachet to the collection by extending his range, by widening his vision.

Olaf Ruhen leads off with THE IMMORTAL, only peripherally science fiction (it has a space ship) and plainly not written as a genre tale. The style is typically quiet Ruhen - colourful but not gaudy - and the end of this story about the problems of becoming a god is forceful in the assured fashion of a writer who knows precisely how to obtain his effects.

By design, I imagine, Baxter has followed it with Robin Tracey's SIREN SINGERS, telling almost the same tale with a more strongly science fictional background. Tracey's version ends similarly, but on a more strident note, and on the whole it is not so successful, mainly because the experienced Ruhen is a

superior craftsman who needs less gimmickry to make his point. The juxtaposition and implied comparison of the two stories is a little unfair to Tracey, who has in fact turned out a neat and tidy tale.

Comes the Martin Loran "Library" story, THE CASE OF THE PERJURED PLANET. Competent, professional, middle-of-the-road ANALOG stuff - and ANALOG is where it first appeared.

It is followed, alas, by the only disaster in the book, the one-page SPACE POEM, by T F Kline. Poem? It is barely verse. At any rate it rhymes in some places and nearly rhymes in others.

David Rome's ROBINSON disappointed me, although others may like it well. It is a short, last-line-snap job, and it was that last line which brought me up short, every instinct crying, "No, no, it can't be like that!" This, however, is the purely subjective reaction to which the hardest-shelled reviewer must occasionally fall victim, knowing that his summation is unfairly coloured. Since the story, bearing on the kind of people who will be called upon to fight in space wars, rests on a premise we have no facts to argue against, I cannot claim that the conclusion is wrong - and could even dig up an argument or two in support of the possibility - but emotionally I cannot accept it and must leave it to the individual reader. Like all David's work it is carefully constructed and thoroughly readable, and he knows the art of making you wait for it. Indeed, my adverse reaction may be the final compliment to that art.

John Williams' NO SALE is another short-short, a satire on economic trends and the ultimate spoliation of the little man. While it is too exaggerated for good satire it makes an amusing five minutes.

Michael Wilding's THE MAN OF SLOW FEELING presents an idea I have never before met in s f, that of a man suffering an injury which retards the reactions of the nervous system. In about 2500 words Wilding presents as nasty a glimpse of hell-on-earth as has come my way, and the punchline is a teaser in the grand tradition.

VALE, POLLINI! by the late and much lamented George Johnston does not belong in this collection, in spite of the editor's determined effort to assert that it does. Technically it is the best story in the book, though the tale is just a light-hearted turning-of-the-tables variation, wherein a parcel of seedy bores are routed by an application of their own techniques. Vastly amusing, and welcome, whether it belongs here or not.

A surprise selection is a three-page excerpt from Douglas Stewart's RUTHERFORD. That it is first class poetry goes without saying. What may come as a surprise is its redolence of that lost sense of wonder. Here is a poet who has looked outwards to the universe and stood in amazement at the infinite complexity of the outstretched hand of God, now bowing to it but rising to meet it with all the power of his soul. I must obtain the entire work.

John Baxter's own contribution, APPLE, is something of a puzzle. Billings, the Moth Killer, enters a giant apple to kill the moth which will menace mankind if allowed to emerge from its cocoon. Or is it an ordinary apple, and the villagers tiny? There may be a symbolic point involved, but it escapes me. Suffice to say that the tale is well told and the writing excellent.

Frank Roberts' A HAPPENING can scarcely be discussed without revealing its es-

sential secret. It is one of those little shock-of-horror anecdotes which make good reading, no matter how soon thereafter you forget it.

DANCING GERONTIUS, by Lee Harding, possibly marks the climax of his "dark vision" period, and is far better written than his entry in THE FIRST PACIFIC BOOK. (Since, I have read FALLEN SPACEMAN, written in a newer, harder, altogether superior style.) It concerns the problems of a world with too many old people in it - a condition already encroaching - and the macabre but not unkindly solution adopted. The structure is nearly faultless, never losing sight of the theme or the intended climax, and the climactic scene itself is a minor tour de force of evocative writing. Only Johnston and Stewart are superior in this collection, and to run third to that pair is as good as a prize.

I cannot remember previously hearing of Steve Kaldor, and I hope there is more of him ready for the printing. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SUDEROV? ends the book with a sharp and tidy story in the central s f tradition. It deals with politics and the problem of supplying water to the settlers on Mars. Most of all, it deals, energetically and with cool amusement, with the character of Suderov. And the ending is as pretty a piece of "could-it-would-it-might-it-have-been?" as is likely to come your way. The final portrait is as pathetic and touching as only the ridiculously dedicated can be.

In general the book shows a growing pre-occupation with the requirements of a good story against the FIRST PACIFIC BOOK's infernal concentration on pretty-pretty writing and intumed vision. The result is refreshing and hopeful for the local product. The book will mark no milestone in s f, or linger long in the memory save for a few oddments, but it is a long step upward on the local scene.

Baxter is to be congratulated. Perhaps he can dig out even better things in another year or two.

- George Turner 1969, 1971

BARRY GILLAM

The Science of Nigromancy :

L Sprague de Camp

BARRY GILLAM discusses:

THE WHEELS OF IF AND OTHER SCIENCE FICTION

by L SPRAGUE DE CAMP

Berkley Medallion S1893 ::
1970 :: 191 pages :: 75c
Original publication:
Shasta Press 1949

THE RELUCTANT SHAMAN AND OTHER FANTASTIC TALES

by L SPRAGUE DE CAMP

Pyramid T2347 :: 1970
190 pages :: 75c

These collections, one a reprint and one newly assembled, bring together thirteen of de Camp's thirties and forties stories and one fifties tale. They display a unified concern and method that contrasts with the fifties stories gathered in A GUN FOR DINOSAUR. Here de Camp makes the individual his subject, and concerns himself with detail, whereas in the fifties stories, de Camp deals with social concerns which quickly date, such as KA THE APPALLING (in THE RELUCTANT SHAMAN). But I am getting ahead of myself. First I must say that de Camp's stories are "popular" in the best meaning of that term. The sf reading audience took them to heart for their integrity rather than for any ingratiating quality they might have. And de Camp's work is universally liked. Indeed the word I'm drawn to by most of his writing is "enjoyable" but...

But that word is almost an epitaph. Reviews of de Camp's work are usually short and reveal only whether or not he is writing on his usual high level. It isn't that easy though. As a friend of mine remarked, "What can you say about (Samuel) Fuller? What's good about him is right up there on the screen." Well, lots of people haven't even seen that. But de Camp is in the same position. When a new book of his comes out, John Boardman chuckles over the historical or anthropological jokes, any reviewer handy says, "very entertaining" (and says nothing else), and in general everyone reads it with enjoyment. If you read de Camp's own SCIENCE-FICTION HANDBOOK, you will see that the author himself makes it look easy when he explains the simple rules of story-telling. Of course he uses his own stories as examples - and they are beautifully clear in construction. What is one to say? - that de Camp is just a "natural" storyteller, a man who comes up with sterling plots and

and humour? I won't accept that - there's more. And that is what this discussion is about.

THE WHEELS OF IF and THE G.NARLY MAN are generally accepted classics. I would like to take a less well known and admittedly lesser story, MR ARSON (from THE RELUCTANT SHAMAN) to use as a starting point for an investigation of de Camp's work. I can easily summarise the premise of this story with two questions: 1. What if a correspondence school offered a course in magic?; the answer to which is: 2. What if a fire elemental were loose in the world?

The characters involved in solving these problems are the following: Clem Buckminster is the Mercury Home Study Institute salesman for the Bronx. He is not overly intelligent, but he is resourceful. Carl Grinnig tries the first lesson of each course, switches inevitably to another, never completes any single one. Although the nigromancy course warns him that he should not attempt conjuration before he has mastered (let alone received) the first three volumes, Grinnig, a typically curious man, does try - and does succeed. In explaining to Clem what happened, Grinnig repeats the conjuration and opens the way for an even more powerful spirit, the Mr Arson of the title. The point is that people do not follow instructions and that they suffer the consequences. As in most comedy, this story presents us with man as an eternally fallible creature. But de Camp will always include a Buckminster with a Grinnig: at the same time man will always muddle through. The characters are just right for a nine thousand word humorous fantasy. As de Camp draws them quickly, he displays his mastery of technique, even in this early (1941) story.

If anything de Camp draws characters more wisely and sadly than any we would expect in "light fantasy" from anyone but de Camp:

"Listen," said Grinnig with strained patience, "every time you sell me a new course, you tell me it'll make me rich. Well, I ain't rich. If they're so hot, why don't you take one? How come you're still selling 'em on commission and living on coffee and sinkers?"

Buckminster shook his head sadly. "Too late for me. Shoulda started when I was a young guy like you, steada playing around and wasting my dough. My future's behind me." (This was all fairly close to the truth.) "Now, about that avi-- "

The obvious fact that Grinnig misses is that if one doesn't finish a course one will never have a chance to make anything out of it. This patient, sad, compassionate view of the majority of mankind, especially Americans, is typical of de Camp. Indeed, de Camp's satire is gentler than the term usually implies. And yet we cannot call the short stories comedies of character. Instead we might call them comedies of type. Clem Buckminster and Carl Grinnig, for all their integrity and resourcefulness, will never better themselves. Grinnig will drink and get into fights while Buckminster will try to forget his abandoned ambitions. "An inconspicuous figure of forty-odd with abundant but graying hair." But his life isn't empty, and so he can still sing, "Down with Harvard, down with Yale. We get our learning through the mail", and enjoy the fellowship of his friends. But in not a few of de Camp's stories we feel that emptiness, that lack of a solid base.

If de Camp's protagonists are types rather than characters, his secondary characters are types rather than caricatures. Here are two excerpts, the first containing the entire role of one minor character, the second being a first appearance:

A stout, harassed-looking civilian came out of the house and pushed through the people. Buckminster recognised the man as Grinnig's landlord. Grinnig called out: "Hey, Mr Feldman! What is it this time?"

Feldman made motions of pulling nonexistent hair. "A book! A book up off the table I was lifting, just a ordinary book it was, and when I open it, into flames it bursts! Right in front of it the gentleman from the insurance company was standing. His own eyes he don't believe! Me, I'm going crazy!" The house owner departed distractedly.

And:

Julian Thurtle, dean of the School of Shop Practice of the Mercury Home Study Institute, looked about as much like a chimpanzee with a white handle-bar moustache as a man can without actually being a chimpanzee with a white handle-bar moustache. But he was a wise old teacher of technics whose courses, the texts for many of which he wrote himself, were up to college standards and had actually helped many ambitious young men on their way to success, as claimed in his company's advertisements.

De Camp's characters, like those of Preston Sturges, are uncannily American. His tales present a tapestry of homespun types and kidded folk wisdom. Like Eugene Palette, Franklin Pangborn, Porter Hall, and a multitude of characters and character-actors, de Camp's peripherals are essential to the stories. De Camp's comedy is not as frantic as Sturges' but he shares the desire for the authenticity that a diversity of detail gives. In the passages above, de Camp doesn't ask you to laugh at the Jewishness of Feldman. We can excuse the excess we find because of the shorthand of a short story. What we find humorous is the offended dignity of Feldman. Feldman cannot understand this revolt of inanimate things. And, for all the briefness of his appearance, his dignity is real. If de Camp did not make this dignity solid, if he only made Feldman into a paper target to be punctured, he would have made Feldman into a caricature. It is just this which makes Sturges' comedies disturbing. The people being satirised are real and our sensibilities and sympathies are divided. We might also note that de Camp makes Feldman serve a thematic purpose. The story relates the reactions of different men to a seemingly irrational upsetting of natural laws. Feldman never faces Arson, but de Camp uses his attitude toward the phenomena in order to offset the actions of Buckminster and Grinnig, who deal constructively with it.

It is interesting to compare de Camp's alternate worlds with those of Fredric Brown and Philip Dick. Those of the latter, for all their comedy, are hasty sketches measured against de Camp's. De Camp's practicality manifests itself in the craziest ways. Stumped for transportation? If you have one steam powered vehicle and one fire elemental, you have but to bring them together. We find de Camp quibbling over rules and laws in many of his stories. We know, when reading de Camp, that the author always places an hilariously twisted set of seemingly mundane rules behind his apparent illogic. He seems attracted by both the freedom of adventure and the security of immutable laws.

De Camp writes an almost Sturgesian comedy of inventions and their unexpected complications, of solutions and their resultant problems. This requires an ability to communicate the scientific or mechanical crises quickly and simply. De Camp, whose non-fiction almost equals his fiction in stirring the reader to

ask, "How was it done?" (THE ANCIENT ENGINEERS, THE HEROIC AGE OF AMERICAN INVENTION, etc, etc.) is the perfect explicator of such things. In particular he gauges most carefully how much he can leave to his audience. In MR ARSON, Grinnig tells Buckminster that he just tried the ritual for conjuring up a salamander: "You know what a salamander is; one of those little red things like a lizard... You think I'm gonna pay for a whole course if I don't know if it works? Anyway, I figure one of those little lizardy things couldn't do no damage... I didn't get no salamander, but a kind of a ball of fire." The reader knows that he did get a salamander, the medieval totem for the element of fire..

Look at the following pair from THE WHEELS OF IF: In one alternate world a newspaper tells of "the victory of Massachusetts over Quebec in the Inter-Colonial football matches (Massachusetts a colony? And football in April?)" The reader knows that this "football" is soccer, so designated outside the US. He may also know that American football was first widely played at the end of the Nineteenth Century. And the soccer season is in spring. Later the hero is told to be quiet: "'Nay alarums, understand? Or -' he drew the tip of his forefinger in a quick circle on the crown of his head. It dawned on Park that he was outlining the part of the scalp that an Indian might remove as a trophy." Without the explanation, even an above average reader could not be expected to catch that gesture's significance.

De Camp is meticulous in following all the possible results of a situation (like a fire elemental walking around) and so he creates a feeling for the totality of creation, which you do not usually find in "light weight" stories. His observations give rise to a kind of poetry of detail. After Mr Arson, seated in the back of the truck, has set fire to its gas tank by mere conduction, he arrives at an old building: "The elemental left black footprints of charred wood on the aged floor." We may cherish such images. They indicate a rigorous science fiction that is tempered by insight. And, of course, this is but one example of de Camp's surprisingly visual sense. We can find a remarkably similar image in Jacques Tourneur's film THE CURSE OF THE DEMON. Just a few pages later we read that Mr Arson has found in a printing plant 'he pamphlets which explain how he may be controlled: "The whole middle of the printery was now a mass of blazing paper, from whose invisible centre Arson roared with demoniac laughter."

Arson represents, as does most of de Camp's magic, an element of nature misunderstood. He is a part of the natural order, and this is important because Arson seems to burst into the dreary world of Clem Buckminster as a representative of chaos. However, de Camp's profound belief in the power of rationality always allows his heroes, armed with knowledge, to subdue the unleashed force. This is a central theme in all of de Camp's work. For he does not show us chaos and order in opposition but assures us that no matter how much apparent chaos, there is always an underlying set of rules. This idea is the basis for his fantasies. A character of LAND OF UNREASON says, "There is no living in a country, or a world, but by its laws." THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER, THE CASTLE OF IRON, THE CARNELIAN CUBE, THE UNDESIRE PRINCESS, and probably others that I haven't read all use this same principle. Thus the heroes are true scientists, seeking to understand and explain the workings of the natural world. Man, the rational, usually wins out but, interestingly, when he doesn't it is usually through the interference of other men rather than through some caprice of nature.

De Camp's stories usually end happily. But those that don't display a singularly poignant loneliness. For de Camp, unlike Heinlein, doesn't wear his heart

sleeve. And we don't find the soft focus and poesy of Bradbury. De Camp's loneliness is that of someone who is trapped by his very nature. A dryad cannot live happily with a mortal, nor a mermaid with a human. Nor, in fact, someone who is locked psychologically into his own shell, or has a single compelling ambition, like the hero of THE TOWER OF ZANID. When we look, though, at the introverts in THE GUIDED MAN and THE HIBITED MAN, we see changes that seem forms of wish fulfillment. All I know of de Camp himself comes from Sam Moskowitz's profile, but even with that alone as evidence, I think it might be suggested that the loneliness of de Camp's characters springs from the author's own experience. Thus he has once more based his fiction on a particularly solid reality. This is not the self-indulgent fantasy of a Swann nor a masochistic daydream like LOVE STORY. De Camp tells his stories flatly, as they must be told, and he admits the desolation of the characters only obliquely. De Camp knows that each man is essentially alone and therefore values all the more highly any love or real friendship.

In THE WHEELS OF IF and THE BEST-LAID SCHEME the heroes adapt to their new conditions surprisingly well. But THE GNARLY MAN remains a classic portrait of a man who is hopelessly an outsider. A Neanderthal who, because of a freak of nature, has never aged, he adapts and tries to stay out of trouble, but he realises that he can never really enter society and must take what small joys are open to him. Naturally, being de Camp's creature, he worries about getting large enough clothes, he covers his scent, and he likes ages when beards are in fashion - he can fade into a crowd more easily. But his final letter, asking to be sent a hat he left behind ("There is not a hat store in this town where I live that can fit me. With best wishes, I remain, Yours Sincerely, Shining Hawk, alias Clarence Aloysius Gaffney") is as effective and affecting as Bradbury's behemoth in THE FOG HORN. Perhaps more so, because de Camp's character is so much closer to us. I might note that the theme of de Camp's story is so potent that Gerald Kersh fashioned a superb story out of it, entitled WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CORPORAL CUCKOO?

I hope that I have demonstrated at least some of the dimensions of de Camp's work. There is more to be investigated: the structure of his comedy, his tradition of adventure and, of course, source work; de Camp has time and again mentioned sociological or mechanical details that he has gleaned from history or anthropology. I am indebted to John Boardman for his WARLORDS OF KRISHNA, in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW No 42 (and I'm still trying to obtain a copy of SPRAGUE DE CAMP'S NEW ANTHOLOGY) but there's a great deal that needs to be done.

The one group that has not neglected him is the reading audience. And, for that matter, the publishing world in 1970-1971 has turned into a cornucopia of de Camp. In 1970 the following appeared for the first time in paperback, either as reprints or originals: THE WHEELS OF IF (Berkley), THE RELUCTANT SHAMAN (Pyramid), THE DAY OF THE DINOSAUR (Curtis) and LOST CONTINENTS (Dover). In 1971 we are promised: WARLOCKS AND WARRIORS (Berkley), THE GLORY THAT WAS (Paperback Library), THE CONTINENT MAKERS (New American Library), AN ELEPHANT FOR ARISTOTLE, THE ARROWS OF HERCULES, and THE GOLDEN WIND (Curtis). There is also DEMONS AND DINOSAURS from Arkham House, a collection of de Camp's verse. And this list doesn't include reissues of a number of his fantasies. All of this means that soon there will be no excuse for a lack of adequate criticism of de Camp; his work is becoming increasingly available.

As for the two collections that prompted the above discussion: If you haven't read THE WHEELS OF IF, buy it and read it. I cannot claim that THE RELUCTANT SHAMAN is as good, but some of the stories are quite good and all are, yes, entertaining.

- At that time science fiction sold the wonders of the universe. If we now discover more wonders, then they don't have the same impact as discovering such wonders in the first place. Campbell was conscious of this and he consistently tried to change s f. From my point of view, he eventually started to go backwards (compared with the changes that occurred in the world at large).

Of course, there have been immense advances in science since the 1930s but they have remained within the broad theoretical framework of quantum mechanics and relativity. There has been a tremendous increase in detail and application. There has also been great theoretical development, but within given contexts. And I don't think scientific advances like these give an s f author much opportunity to display his imagination. For a start the greater the detail, the greater the technical knowledge the writer must have to understand further developments. S f uses very basic ideas, such as the theory that there are habitable planets other than Earth. Of course, one can write s f stories around scientific details: Larry Niven's NEUTRON STAR hinged on the fact that if a gravitational field is intense enough, observers on a spaceship can feel tidal effects. Yet how many s f stories have used electronics as a plot device, despite the fact that this is the all-pervasive technology of the twentieth century? But s f does not even use all the basic theories available. How many stories deal with quantum mechanics?

I read John Foyster's contributions with interest, particularly the one on Budrys (I used to read GALAXY BOOKSHELF regularly). I don't agree with George Turner's criticism of John Foyster's article, as I thought Foyster's use of quotations made a telling argument. We all know quotations can be used out of context, but I can't see any evidence that that is the case here.

And I wish John Foyster would write and prove that s f started in 1926. I'm sure it did, and can't prove it. (May 31, 1971) *

* I'm still waiting myself for John Foyster to carry out that threat that he made in EM 1. Thanks very much for your comments, Derek. Perhaps far more people than I suspect both enjoyed and understood SFC 19. Not that it matters; the important thing is that it exists, and the contents justify themselves.

* And while we're talking about John Campbell (more later), here's a rather belated, but enlightening, look at Campbell's most famous piece of short fiction:

* HANK DAVIS (Box 154, Loyall, Kentucky 40854, USA)

SFC 20 arrived today, reminding me that I intended to comment on SFC 18. Your whole article ((THIRTY YEARS OF MISDIRECTION)) was thought-provoking. Now I realise that "thought-provoking" today is a secret code for "I didn't agree with a damn thing you said, but I'm too polite to say so," but I'm serious - even if I didn't agree with much that you said...

I had never considered that WHO GOES THERE? is a "paranoic nightmare", but then I'm inclined to be dense. When I read the story last, however, a confirmation came to mind:

Norris: "I had some swell nightmares - that it wasn't made like we are... but of a different kind of flesh that it can really control. That it can change its shape and look like a man - and wait to kill and eat - " (page 505 in the Modern Library ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE).

Later, on page 513 - Connant: "'It's a wonder the hellish creature didn't eat me in my sleep.' Blair started back... fear struck. 'Maybe it di - er - uh - we'll have to find it.'"

One character dreams about the Thing's power of mimicry, tells the dream to Blair, who, apparently with no other information, suspects that Connant is an extraterrestrial changeling. Only later does anyone substantiate that the shape-changing ability is more than a dream revelation, when the partly changed corpse of the first (?) creature is examined. (Later we find that Blair is a Thing, but it is hard to see whether he is one at this point and faking a reaction ((to fool the reader of the story?)))

I remember that this dream revelation shtick irritated me when I first read the story (about 1960). Campbell "explains" it with telepathy, but both the dream and telepathy are unnecessary elements in the story and not even interesting window dressing. Worse, the dream spoils the shock that should come after the first Thing is killed - what should be a peak of the story comes only as a confirmation of a dream.

This made me wonder whether I could reinterpret the story - are the events of the story indeed a paranoid's nightmare? and, most comforting of all to the Eng Lit types, are the monsters legendary? This should appeal to the same Eng Lit types who insist that the ghosts in THE TURN OF THE SCREW are imaginary. (**brg** I hate to say it, but the ghosts in TURN OF THE SCREW are imaginary.**). However, WHO GOES THERE? contains more than one viewpoint. In fact, one of the story's technical weaknesses is the way the viewpoint hops from behind one pair of eyes to another, not always with good reason. There are times when I'm not sure over whose shoulder I am supposed to peek.

Not only is the story safe from reinterpretation, but I don't think the tag of "paranoid nightmare" can be made to stick. Almost from the beginning the Antarctic team members try to devise a test that will distinguish between human and changeling. The first one fails, but McReady uses reason to devise another. When paranoids use reason, they wax sophistical to prove that everyone is Out To Get Them, rather than to separate friend from foe. Isn't much of life spent trying to determine who is friend, who is foe? (**brg** Only for the paranoid.**)

And the test that McReady devises works only because each Thing is looking out for Number One. Alien X will not hesitate to join with the humans in destroying Alien Y in order to keep its own identity secret. The aliens will not co-operate - but the humans can and do defeat them. This is paranoid?

I agree that Campbell's treatment of the notion, technical crudities or no, remains the most readable. Brian Aldiss' GENE-HIVE (JOURNEY TO THE INTERIOR), written with a mastery of language, still comes in second. (And not because of the ending: the narrator's decision that "There is only one proper way to become extinct: with dignity" and that he does nothing, irritates me more than any "anti-humanist sentiment" in WHO GOES THERE?)

In several points in the essay, I did not get what you were driving at. My fault perhaps. (June 16, 1971) *

* Perhaps. That last sentence slightly spoils my pleasure at receiving the first part of the letter: here's someone who's actually willing to argue about a piece of science fiction, and without resorting to generalisations, but who won't explain exactly why he did not get what I was driving at. (I am constantly amazed that anybody gets what I am driving at. Usually I forget anyway.)

One point: I called the main premise of WHO GOES THERE? paranoid because it is based on a kind of unthinking Us and Them premise. The humans assume from the start that the aliens are enemies, and this leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Hatred, horror, and disgust - Campbell mainly trades on these emotions in the story. Kill or be killed. - But no, it's more than that, because we hear innumerable stories about soldiers fighting in the war who had to kill or be killed, but could not bother with conscious emotions of hatred, horror, and disgust, about the enemy on the other side of the lines. On the other hand, Campbell's characters sound more like precursors of Senator Joe McCarthy than G I Joe fighting the Germans. I admit that there are all sorts of other ramifications of WHO GOES THERE?, and John Bangsund looks at them superbly in the best article he has ever written. I only hope SCYTHROP or SFC readers eventually see it in its original form. (It first appeared in a small-circulation apazine.)

Now we've returned to Campbell and AITAS, we may as well treat ourselves to some more high-class nostalgia:

* GEORGE TURNER (4 Robertson Avenue, St Kilda, Victoria 3182)

As regards ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE being preceded by other anthologies: I have no doubt that Alex Eisenstein is right, and in fact remember the Viking POCKET SCIENCE FICTION very well (and a dull one it was).

But I must back your judgment of the Healy/McComas volume as the "most consistently enjoyable" s f anthology, if only because no other s f anthology ever gave me so much pleasure, despite the fact that I had read most of the stories in their magazine appearances. Most had been written eight to ten years before the collection appeared, and had survived WW2 very well; many of them still survive - a rarity in s f.

I suppose the thing about AITAS was that the number of outstanding stories in it has never been matched, and many of them are regarded as s f classics (little as I like the word). Read today, they perhaps lose glamour, but it is only when the glamour is gone that the values appear. And of course all fiction must be read in the context of its period, which happens to have been the period when I read them.

Looking back, one sees faults. WHO GOES THERE?, for instance, fails through a plot weakness which I did not spot until the third reading many years later and which I have never heard pointed out by anyone else. Yet there is a point in the changing groupings of humans and aliens when the aliens must inevitably have won the day; and, being telepathic, they would have known it. Nonetheless WHO GOES THERE? was the high point of Campbell's career as a fiction writer, and for sheer impact stood alone for many years. I recall that one horrified reader of ASTOUNDING wrote in to protest that the conception was obscene! Times change, but don't they?

BY HIS BOOTSTRAPS is still unchallenged, for the plain reason that it was an original, a trick that can be played effectively only once in a long while. Heinlein's later ALL YOU ZOMBIES carried it a bit further, but I doubt if there's now any further to go. The performance has killed the idea.

THE ROADS MUST ROLL was the first story to really look at the rolling roads idea - which is almost as old as s f - and see what it might portend besides lazy transport. And Heinlein in his technological period was far more interesting than today's ten cent philosopher.

Asimov's NIGHTFALL can be faulted on structural and technical grounds but remains one of the most popular and most reprinted s f stories, probably because of the strangeness of the conception. That old sense of wonder? In those days new ideas popped up like mushrooms; today there are few, despite the immense opening up of the scientific scene. But then, what has modern s f to do with science?

THE PROUD ROBOT was a funny story, and who's been really funny since Kuttner and Fredric Brown left the scene? I suppose Jack Wodhams is a trier, but is too busy with his complexities to get a belly laugh.

Van Vogt's ASYLUM was and is memorable, not because of its "science", which was laughable, but because a comparatively new writer was bashing blithely through barriers even Campbell and Smith hadn't attempted, and opening up areas of operation which attracted simply because they were - for their time - breath-taking. His BLACK DESTROYER was also there, and the same remarks apply.

One remembers also (this is all memory - my copy vanished years ago) MECHANICAL MICE, by Maurice Hugi who, I think, turned out to be somebody in disguise - Poul Anderson? - and Gallun's SEEDS OF THE DUSK, while del Rey's NERVES constitutes his only real success as an s f writer.

HE WHO SHRANK sticks in the memory as the only real dud of the collection - Ray Cummings updated with the romance taken out.

Then there was Lee Gregor's only successful story, HEAVY PLANET, in its day startlingly new in conception. In fact the volume is packed with ideas which inspired and thrilled in the forties and have since been dulled by drab and conventional usage. They were the ideas of young writers tired of the old Gernsback era s f, and that they were good ideas is indicated by their absorption into the body of s f as standard concepts. That is why, for the real s f lover as against

the seekers after high-tension escapism and mind-bending symbolism (however ill-digested and incoherent), AITAS remains a repository of gems.

They really had to be professionals in those days. Now, anyone can do it. The pity is that almost anyone does. *

* John W Campbell died on July 11, and many people still have not become used to his absence. LOCUS published its very fine obituary issue: Noreascon gave Campbell its (posthumous) First Fandom Award; John Bangsund will publish JOHN W CAMPBELL: AN AUSTRALIAN TRIBUTE. And two Melbourne organisations, the Melbourne University Science Fiction Association, and the Science Fiction Discussion Group, will conduct a Symposium about John W Campbell in three days time. I'll try to include a brief report on this event somewhere in this issue.

The idea for a Symposium took shape in a conversation held between John Bangsund and John Julian at midnight about three weeks ago. A few of the rest of us listened. I've never heard before a conversation that almost took on the shape of an artistic event; perhaps I never will again. The first meeting of the Science Fiction Discussion Group had taken place (this is the "successor" to the now defunct Nova Mob, which originally started as a science fiction discussion group). I enjoyed the night, especially as I heard George Turner give one of his clearest dissertations ever on his ideas about science fiction. Lee Harding agreed with George - after George's opening blast, Lee could hardly do anything else. Fortunately for the discussion, several members of the audience disagreed with both Lee and George, so the meeting became rather lively.

On the other hand, when we repaired to John Julian's lodgings (micro-miniaturisation in action), I found that John Bangsund was dissatisfied with proceedings because of the composition of the audience: i.e. a small proportion of exactly the same people who attended the first meeting of the Nova Mob a year earlier. John wanted to attract the s f readers - the vast throng of people who buy books from the Space Age Book Shop each day (for example), read science fiction, and even have a serious interest in s f. How do we attract them? Firstly, John Julian worked out what kind of people they are. For a start, they are people who may have attended meetings concerning almost any number of hobbies and interests, from new leftism to photography. And what do they find at each of these meetings? The in group, the fans or acolytes or what-have-you, the people who speak to each other and for each other - the initiates. And what do these same seriously-interested people find when they attend meetings about s f or even the Melbourne S F Club? The same in-groupers, the initiated, the fans, having a marvellous time talking to and for each other. Huge fun, of course, but the seriously-interested don't come back again. They buy some more s f books, and perhaps even an Advent Book or two, and never get around to talking about s f.

How do we interest these people? Well, we assume (and I'm still relating what I remember of John Julian's opinions) that they are most likely to attend university, or at least hold some affiliations with a university. A dangerous assumption, perhaps, but fairly reliable. We assume that these people will become annoyed with any signs of fannishness. We assume that these people want to hear knowledgeable and interesting people talking about science fiction (people such as Turner and Harding) and will want to swap opinions with them. And - ultimate dangerous assumption - we assume that these

people will eventually realise that s f fans are not nuts, that fandom is at the very least a good way to meet s f professionals, and at its best, a way of life that may bring the reader a large number of long-lasting friendships with like-minded people. And that these mythical readers will find out all this by 1975, when, if all goes well, they really will have a chance to see the s f world in all its glory.

How do we attract this vast throng? With events like the Symposium on John W Campbell... we hope. When you receive this magazine, the event will have finished, and we can work out if we achieved any of our aims. Our main aim is to give a multi-faceted overview of the life and work of John W Campbell, of course; but in doing so, we must make many observations about the whole development of science fiction, for Campbell engineered so much of that development. But when we talk about the whole field, then we talk about its possible future development in Australia. To aid that, events like the Symposium must succeed. In a few days time we will find out.

You're probably wondering how that conversation finished up? John Bangsund was sitting on the floor, his back to the wall. A strip of carpet detached itself from the wall, and tried to wrap itself around JB's neck. "Watch out for that wall," said JJ helpfully, "Water seeps through the wall, and moss has grown on this side. It might wrap itself around your neck." "Ah," said JB, "like the new morelity?"

* Somewhere along the way, I stopped talking about SFC 19. HARLAN ELLISON received that issue of the magazine, as well as Number 18. Harlan Ellison didn't particularly like what he saw, but he doesn't want me to publish the letter. (I can forgive anyone for not liking SFC, but it's hard to forgive someone who forbids me to print his letter-of-comment). In reply, I did say to Harlan, as many others have said before, that he identified a little too strongly with his stories. After all, I liked PROWLER IN THE CITY and DANGEROUS VISIONS. Unfortunately, Harlan did not like the fact that I did not like the rest of his fiction. In his eyes, does that mean that I don't like him? Since I haven't met him, and perhaps never will, I don't know. But Harlan doesn't detect the difference; and even if he does, he sent another letter to the effect that "you may drop my name from your mailing list". Now S F COMMENTARY's success is assured - my first drop-me-from-your-mailing-list letter! Dick Geis got lots of those, and you know where they got him. (All right, I know where they eventually got him, but he survived for a fair while before then). But I did say to Harlan Ellison that I just don't happen to have received any sympathetic, beautifully-argued-and-documented, lucid articles defending the stories of Harlan Ellison. Anyone want the job?

* While I'm still in a nasty mood (and what better mood for typing stencils for SFC?) I must share with you the following pearl of wisdom from our Prime Minister, who makes Harlan Ellison seem like a genius. Recently, Dr Paul Ehrlich, whose opinions should interest at least some s f fans, visited Australia, and annoyed a large number of important pressure groups. Among other things, he said that Australia must limit its population to not more than 15 million people. Mr MacMahon, our Prime Minister, heard about these heretical remarks, and said that... "he was not attracted by what Professor Ehrlich had said. Mr MacMahon said he knew that Australia could provide better living standards for a population vastly larger than 15 million, provided only that the Liberal-Country Party coalition remained in government." Mr MacMahon is on record as saying his favourite reading matter is READER'S DIGEST. He was also the person who could not think of a reply when a TIME reporter asked him what he envisioned for Australia's future. Can we call him the Non-S F

-Reader-of-the-Year? Previously I was willing to nominate Sir Henry Bolte, because of his non-attitudes to the problems of pollution in Melbourne and Victoria. THE REVIEW, still Australia's best newspaper/magazine, reports that Sir Henry said expansively after his recent trip to see German industrialists, that, "Australia could become the quarry for most of the world." Or, of Westernport Bay, "We care about water pollution, but it is not more important than a 100-million dollar industry". Whoopee, huh? Actually, despite Sir Henry's attempts to prove his own imbecility, Melbourne still has one of the lowest pollution counts of any city in the world. It just doesn't seem that Sir H. is trying to keep it that way. (For instance, in a long-remembered address to the fourth form students of Altona High School, I said that Flinders St Railway Terminus is sufficient proof that the Victorian government does not read s f; if they did, they might have noticed that internal combustion engines have exhaust pipes and electric trains don't. Whatever the reason, they certainly neglect the Victorian Railways.)

* To turn from the unimaginably horrific (Melbourne in 30 years time) to the imaginably horrifying, the results of the Hugo awards. In case you haven't seen the 71 results: NOVEL: RINGWORLD (Larry Niven). NOVELLA: ILL MET IN LANKHMAR (Fritz Leiber). SHORT STORY: SLOW SCULPTURE (Theodore Sturgeon). DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: No Award (it's nice to know that the Ditmars started the trend). PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Leo & Diane Dillon. PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE: FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION (ed. Ed Ferman). FANZINE: LOCUS (eds. Charlie & Dena Brown). FAN ARTIST: Alicia Austin. FAN WRITER: Richard Geis. I cannot get excited about many of the awards. I think I voted No 1 for Eddie Jones for Pro Artist, but I'm glad that the Dillons finally won the award they've deserved for at least three years. That last one should have been for "Richard Geis's Alter Ego". And see page 3 for more details about the fanzine winner. (Results from Joanne Burger; later from LOCUS).

* As this issue drags on interminably in the production, things change. For instance, the John W Campbell Symposium took place two weeks ago, as I write this last page. Within its objectives, it was a success. It drew many people that I have not seen before, who are s f readers, and who also showed some interest in other aspects of science fiction beside the reading of it. The Symposium itself drew an almost complete picture of the career of Campbell. George Turner gave a very good opening talk that showed that Campbell was not a good writer - indeed, he wrote only two good stories - but his writing helped to change the direction of s f in the 1930s and 1940s. John Foyster gave a complete description of Campbell the Editor, and attempted to show why he made the changes in ASTOUNDING that he did. According to Foyster, Campbell was more a man of the 18th and 19th centuries than of the 20th century; he preferred words to actions, and liked most to spark off reactions in other people. John Bangsund delivered Redd Boggs' mock attack on Campbell's "crank" theories; that he was a "clever and persuasive propagandist for the right wing" because he "diverted human energy from attacking matters in the real world". Henry Couchman showed how Campbell did educate people; and Wynne Whiteford showed why Campbell's influence will continue to dominate most of science fiction. A lively question time, and supper, followed. In almost every respect (except, perhaps, the venue of the Classics Theatre at Melbourne University) it was a far better occasion than anything similar ever held before in Melbourne.

* Two last words. Careful readers note that I committed nearly every sin that I ascribed to Arnie Katz; SPECULATION is not dead - it is merely "sluggish". G'bye. *

S F COMMENTARY 23 CHECKLIST - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

ON JOHN W CAMPBELL (48-50) * TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY (25-32) * Robin Tracey : SIREN SINGERS (36) * George Turner (48, 50) * George Turner: ON WRITING ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION (ASFR 18) (8-9) * A E van Vogt: ASYLUM (47) * Kurt Vonnegut (7) * Stanley G Weinbaum: A MARTIAN ODYSSEY (13) * Peter Weston (ed.): SPECULATION (4, 50) * Michael Wilding: THE MAN OF SLOW FEELING (37) * John Williams: NO SALE (37) * Jack Wodhams: THERE IS A CROOKED MAN (36) * Last stencil typed Sep. 27 *