

Science Fiction News having completed its first year, let us see where we stand. Firstly, why SFN in the first place? Secondly, what has been achieved?

Science fiction is a rather untidy and ill-directed body of literature, largely ephemeral and in constant flux. The casual reader need not concern us, but anyone seriously interested in the appreciation and study of the field or some aspect of it must soon realise what a difficult task it can become to keep abreast of what is going on or to follow up something of interest.

To help lighten the darkness a little the Australian Science Fiction Association was formed. Some useful work has been done on the basic problem of information about the field, but it seemed a good idea to establish a regular coverage of what is published. A monthly publication with this as its first purpose, to which could be added notes on any significant events, informed comment, reviews.

In the first issue we said: "The policy will be experimental...you may expect some variety and modification with experience." And so it remains. So far we have only been able to try a few ideas of many suggested, but in time we will explore the possibilities more fully. Of course we hope to expand and extend the service. But the listing of current books and of the main useful book reviews goes on. This year in place of the monthly "Anniversaries" feature we will have a

regular column, "Looking Backward", reminding us of the continuity of the field with its past. Yes, it's easy to overdo the history of SF, and we'll try not to. But there is a past, we do have traditions it would be a pity to lose.

Last year SFN was handed out gratis to all who seemed likely to appreciate it. Though it would be exaggeration to say that we now have the publication well established, we now have some kind of character and continuity. If you find it useful, let us have your support. You can join the Association, which besides bringing you SFN regularly will provide some other matter and offers as well scope for useful work in the cause of science fiction for anyone looking for a cause. Annual subscription is three dollars.

The Journal of the Association, the original publication, has never achieved regular schedule and did not appear at all in 1969. The main difficulty was lack of suitable material, which will not be solved easily; but we hope to produce it again before long. Anyone with ideas for contributions is urged to come forward.

What about cumulating the book lists from the last year, and the earlier irregular lists in the Journal? Yes, sooner or later it will have to be done. There is a considerable body of data on books besides these on file. But the difficulties are many. It is no accident that no such a thing as a full general bibliography of science fiction has ever been produced although many times suggested and even commenced. No rash promises, therefore. Not when we have other fair sized projects going already.

The Index to British Science Fiction Magazines to 1953 is still in progress in parts, not free to the membership (since few expressed an interest in it) but available at reduced

rates, 2/3 of published price. Those so far available are Parts 1 (Scoops, Tales of Wonder, prewar Fantasy) at 20c (30c); 2 (Astounding, 1939/53) at 30c (45c); 3 (The Hornig and Lowndes-edited magazines and derivatives) at 40c (60c). Part 4 is partly duplicated and covers Amazing, Fantastic Adventures and Fantastic, and the early years of New Worlds and Science-Fantasy. Another four parts will complete the coverage. Each of these lists the contents of each issue, noting names of illustrators, changes in format and other incidentals, and indexes by author. Publication in parts was undertaken to hurry up production on a work delayed for a long time, and it must be admitted has not proved very popular. There will be a full Index to the whole period comprising the issue entries from all the parts, plus author and title indexes to the lot -- hopefully ready this year. Donald H. Tuck has stencilled the complete title index for us and the balance of the undertaking is creeping ahead.

The Australian Science Fiction Index, 1925/1967, is still available to members at \$2-00 (others 3-00), but will soon be sold out. This was not as expected: instead of producing a slim supplement to this to cover the last two years, which was the intention, we might end up starting on a revised edition this year, if orders keep up at the present rate.

Two publications somewhat overdue are the annotated reading list for beginners in SF and the index of short stories in books. The first has not progressed beyond rough notes as yet. Suggestions for more books you think should be included in a basic reading list with your reasons are still welcome. The second is to cumulate the three lists in the Journal and add much more material. Several members are still contributing to this, and anyone with a fair SF collection wishing to help should

speaking up. It was planned to close off for publication with the contents of 500 books; this target has been passed but we are still adding material for a while until it is more convenient to begin stencilling.

There are other avenues open for anyone interested in giving a hand. And other areas of information have been suggested for attention which it has not been possible to give them yet; but if a few members feel the need to be urgent enough to volunteer their services more might be undertaken.

G. B. Stone
Secretary

CURRENT SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS

ALDISS, Brian W[ilson] 1925-

An AGE. Sphere, 1969. 187 p. PB 5/- (1st Faber 1967) Review: Sydney Morning Herald 30.12.67 p. 13

ASIMOV, Isaac, 1920-

ASIMOV'S MYSTERIES. Panther, 1969. 253 p. PB 5/- (1st Doubleday 1968; Rapp 1968; Dell PB 1969) Title a little misleading: all the stories are SF. Review: Analog Aug 1968 p. 164

-- OPUS 100. Houghton, 1969. 318 p. \$5.95.
Professor Asimov's 100th book, selections from some earlier ones with added comments. Mostly nonfiction but surely of interest to us

BEECHING, Jack

The DAKOTA PROJECT. Delacorte, 1969. 229 p.
\$4.95 (1st Cape 1968)

BELLAMY, Edward, 1850-1898

EQUALITY. Gregg Press, 1969. 412 p. \$16.00;
Scholarly Press, 1969. 412 p. \$12.00. (1st Apple-
ton 1897) Sequel to Looking Backward, laborious-
ly amplifying the original arguments and answer-
ing objections. These two greatly overpriced
editions show that there is still a steady in-
terest in Bellamy's quaint theoretical socialism
-- an Australian PB edition appeared in 1943
and should be easy to pick up if you're curious.

BOVA, Ben

The DUELLING MACHINE. Holt, 1969. 247 p. \$4.50

BULMER, Kenneth

QUENCH THE BURNING STARS. Hale, 1970. 191 p.
21/-

CONQUEST, Robert

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE. Sphere, 1970. 192 p. PB
(1st Ward, Lock 1955; Ballantine PB 1964)
Review: New Worlds 46

COOPER, Edmund

The SQUARE ROOT OF TOMORROW. Hale, 1970. 192 p.
21/- . Shorts

DAVIES, L[eslie] P[urnoll]

DIMENSION A. Jenkins, 1969. 207 p. 25/- (1st
Doubleday 1968)

Current Books

- DICK, Philip K[andred] 1928-
TIME OUT OF JOINT. Penguin, 1969. 187 p. PB 5/-
(1st Lippincott 1959; Belmont PB 1965)
- DISCH, Thomas M.
ECHO ROUND HIS BONES. Hart-Davis, 1969. 156 p.
30/- (In New Worlds Dec 1966-Jan 1967)
- HEINLEIN, Robert A[nson] 1907-
The MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON. New English Library,
1970. 238 p. PB 6/- (1st Shasta 1950; Signet
1951; incomplete; Sidgwick 1953; Pan PB 1955)
First volume of the early Heinlein stories hav-
ing a common general background. Now dated in
details but still recommended.
Reviews: Astounding US Mch 1951 p. 144; Ga-
laxy US May 1951; Future SF US Sep 1951; Super
Science Nov 1950; Other Worlds Mch 1951; SF Ad-
vertiser May 1950; Saturday Review 17.6.50
- HERBERT, Frank, 1920-
DUNE MESSIAH. Putnam, 1969. 256 p. \$4.95 (In
Galaxy Jly-Oct 1969)
- JONES, Langdon ed.
The NEW S.F.: an original anthology of modern
speculative fiction. [sic] Hutchinson, 1969.
223 p. 30/-. Probably includes some science
fiction.
- JUDD, Cyril [i.e. C. M. Kornbluth and Judith Merril]
GUNNER CADE. Dell, 1969, 160 p. PB 50c. (1st
in Astounding US Mch-May 1952, Br. Aug-Oct 1952;
Simon & Schuster 1952; Gollancz 1964; Penguin 1966)
Review: Astounding US Mch 1953 p. 160

LAUMER, Keith, 1925-

IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD GALAXY. Dobson, 1969. 160 p.
(1st Berkley 1968) Contents: The Body Builders;
The Planet Wreckers; The Star-sent Knavos; The
War with the Yukks; Gooboreality.

LEIBER, Fritz, 1910-

A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING TEXAS. Gollancz, 1969.
245 p. 30/- (1st Walker 1969; in Galaxy Jly-Sep
1968) Reviews: Mag of F&SF Nov 1969 p. 49;
Venture Nov 1969 p. 106

McINTOSH, J. T. [i.e. James Murdoch MacGregor, 1925-]

SIX GATES FROM LIMBO. Corgi, 1969. 158 p. PB 4/-
(1st Joseph 1968; SFBC 1969; in If Jan-Feb 1969
as Six Gates to Limbo) Review: SF News Dec 1969

MEAD, Shepherd

The CAREFULLY CONSIDEREC RAPE OF THE WORLD. Pen-
guin, 1969. 191 p. PB 5/- (1st Simon & Schuster
1966; Macdonald 1966)

Reviews: Mag of F&SF May 1966 p. 44; Analog
Sep 1966 p. 161; Library Journal 15.2.66 p. 966;
N.Y. Times 20.2.66 p. 31; Saturday Review 12.3.66
p. 152

MERLE, Robert, 1908-

The DAY OF THE DOLPHIN. Simon & Schuster, 1969.
320 p. \$5.95. (From French: Un animal doué de
raison, 1967) Reviews: Analog Sep 1969 p. 160;
Library Journal 1.5.69 p. 1899; N.Y. Times 13.7.
69 p. 4; Newsweek 28.7.69 p. 82; Saturday Review
28.6.69 p. 39

Current Books

- NORTON, Andre [i.e. Alice Mary Norton, 1912-]
MOON OF THREE RINGS. Longmans, 1969. 316 p.
21/- (1st Viking 1966) Juvenile
- POSTMARKED THE STARS. Harcourt, 1969. 223 p.
\$4.50
- RANKINE, John [i.e. Douglas Rankine Mason]
The JANUS SYNDROME. Halo, 1969. 190 p. 18/-
- The WEISMAN EXPERIMENT. Dobson, 1969. 184 p.
25/-
- ROBERTS, Keith
The FURIES. Pan, 1969. 220 p. PB 5/- (1st in
Science-Fantasy Jly-Sep 1965; Hart-Davis 1966;
Berkley PB 1966) Review: Mag of F&SF Nov 1966
- RUSS, Joanna
PICNIC ON PARADISE. Macdonald, 1969. 157 p.
21/- (1st Ace 1968) Reviews: Amazing Mch 1969
p. 143; Analog Apr 1969 p. 165; ASEFA Journal
1/10 p. 266
- SCHMITZ, James H.
The DEMON BREED. Macdonald, 1969. 157 p. 21/-
(Ace PB 1968; in Analog Sep-Oct 1968 as The
Tuvela) Reviews: Amazing Mch 1969 p. 142;
Analog Jly 1969 p. 167
- THROSSELL, Ric, 1922-
The DAY BEFORE TOMORROW. Angus & Robertson,
1969. 83 p. \$1.95. A play first staged 1956,
apparently not printed before. Review: Bulletin,
1.11.69 p. 60

- VANCE, Jack [i.e. John Holbrook Vance, 1916-]
EMPHYRIO. Doubleday, 1969. 261 p. \$4.95 (In Fantastic Jly-Aug 1969)
- van VOGT, A[lfred] E[lton] 1912-
MOONBEAST. Panther, 1969. 187 p. PB 5/- (1st Doubleday 1963, Macfadden 1964, as The Beast. Based on shorts The Beast and The Great Engine)
- WILLIAMS, Eric C[Lyril]
TO END ALL TELESCOPES. Hale, 1969. 190 p. 21/-
- ZELAZNY, Roger
A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES. Hart-Davis, 1969. 207 p. Panther, 1969. 189 p. PB 5/- (1st as Four for the Future, Ace, 1968) Review: Canberra Times 13.12.69



- DICKSON, Lovat, 1902-
H. G. WELLS: his turbulent life and times. Macmillan, 1969. xi, 330 p. 63/-. A significant book, though inadequate. There is still plenty to be said about Wells' life. But a rather unsympathetic account based on long acquaintance is valuable.
Reviews: Atlantic Monthly Aug 1969 p. 92; Library Journal Jly 1969 p. 2598; Christian Science Monitor 28.8.69 p. 9; New Republic 16.8.69 p. 20; N.Y. Times 3.8.69 p. 1; Newsweek 1.8.69 p. 80; Time 1.8.69 p. 73; Age, Melbourne 17.1.70 p. 11; Australian 31.1.70; Canberra Times 24.1.70 p. 15; Sydney Morning Herald 21.2.70 p. 20

R E V I E W S

An AFFAIR WITH GENIUS
by Joseph Green

Gollancz, 1969
190 p.

I recently read a review by another critic who suggested that when he picked up "a book" he expected a continuous narrative, a novel, and was therefore let down when he found the covers enclosed a collection of short stories. With this I am inclined to agree: "a book" is something with which to wrestle mentally; a collection of short stories is something to while away odd moments in fragmented bursts of reading. So it is with this collection. There are some collections where each story is a delightful little twister of one sort or another (e.g. Clarke's). Unfortunately, for me, Green just doesn't grab me like these rarer cases and while I won't because I can't say his nine tales here are a drag, equally I can't say I'm inspired by them.

Jinn brings us Homo Superior, and suggests that given enough of them they would split into rival factions like any others. Clever points: a form of English called Faspeech, which is a logical development; and a highly detailed process by which humans could live by eating grass. Concludes on a "noble" note.

The Decision Makers deals with humans meeting an alien race with a group mind on a planet which goes through an ice age very frequently, about every 30,000 years. We meet the neo-colonialist and the untouchable government agent. Also concludes on a "noble" note with a King Solomon decision.

Once around Arcturus is a love story in which an Earthman deserts his ship to woo a near-enough-to-human humanoid. An Earth sociologist

studies this from our point of view while an alien counterpart reciprocates. Certain tests are applied, given in quite clever detail, and the conclusion appears to be that of thwarted romance; then in less than a quarter page we have a happy ending.

The Engineer is about dreams fed to a man who suffered withdrawal from an uncomfortable life. This is written in almost TV style, with scenes chopping from "reality" to "dream" until he is cured of his psychosis -- but it ends with him wondering how long will elapse before he returns to hospital. This is almost good.

Single Combat is good. How do we infiltrate a near-human alien race? Of course, plant a Quisling disguised to suit. The way the human put into this position makes his distaste for his work known, and the way his suffering and demise are stated, sets this story above the general standard of the collection. The end is neat. In the second-last sentence we discover one other native was also an agent, put there just in case the main character was removed.

Life-Force covers the nasty situation where settlers from Earth kill and eat natives just developing intelligence, and how to stop it.

An Affair with Genius is another romance, with only two characters who overcome failure of their life-dome on a hostile world. I feel it is somewhat trivial.

Tunnel of Love concerns a couple of smart guys who flit around filming native ceremonies on other planets for profit. Here they become involved in a genetic device planted hundreds of years before, which had become the basis of a native fertility cult.

Dance of the Jats contains the same pair. Here they settle the non-compatibility of two races and

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at the same time settle a score with an old associate.

Out of the nine, you see, I say one is good; one fair; and seven are certainly not bad but unfortunately if I try to praise them with faint ~~damns~~ I will finish up ~~damning~~ with faint praise. Nearly all are "problem" stories, which as a rule I like, but on analysis I will show what I think goes wrong in Green's work.

I believe all SF problem plits should (a) state the problem; (b) give all information required to solve it, plus any amount of unnecessary detail; (c) artfully show how to spot the correct bit of information, then (d) show the reader how dumb he is in not seeing it. I have of course exaggerated here, but I hope you get the idea.

Green falls down because he says (a) "Right-oh, chaps, we have a problem"; (b) "Now look here, this is what we'll do about it"; (c) "That's all there is to it". He gives no sense of mystery, urgency, confusion to the reader, etc, except in Single Combat.

I have read his book The Loafers of Refuge. Now there is a good book, maybe because he had space to cover his theme in his pedestrian way, but it is done by expounding a situation, showing the difficulties, explaining the limitations, and winding up to a nice well rounded ending.

Let me use an analogy from music. Haydn wrote very nice symphonies which are pleasant to hear and are well constructed works of art. No one would question his skill. I enjoy his work myself, but I class it as impersonal, external, background music which does not interrupt any work I am doing while listening. Beethoven

wrote music which in some ways defied contemporary conventions. His symphonies surge with personal emotion, they seeth with violence, overflow with passion, clamor with frenzy of the man's irritable nature, yet can sink into tranquil pools of soothing sound. They defy the listener to ignore them, where Haydn's scholarly work provides a pleasing musical tapestry.

Like Haydn, Green generally fails to clutch the reader and involve him. He tells a story without pulling the reader into the scenario by force of the manner of telling.

Also like Haydn he obeys the rules, the principal one being that he is allowed one "impossible" thing per story. As a matter of fact you can go through and pick out the unlikely point in each tale without which liberty by the author the structure would collapse. That's good. It is also fair to point out that some go back seven years (Single Combat appeared in 1964) and even at the present rate of flow of time they have not been dated. Also a good point. So on technique one can say nothing against him.

His ideas are good, his English is good, and -- to fill in time in a pleasant, non-involved manner -- these stories are quite good reading, but it is most unfortunate that they just don't seize my attention because the writer is a competent draftsman but not an artist.

-- Ronald B. Ward

The MEN IN THE JUNGLE
by Norman Spinrad

Avon, 1969
285 p. PB US95c

A disgusting book. Don't get me wrong, it is meant to be. It takes the horror

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and obscenity of violence, sadism, despoilation of human rights and integrity, about as far as possible. "Brutal and brilliant", the blurb writer says of it, "Repression and revolution...torture, murder, slavery, cannibalism." Just so. It is not for the squeamish. In a generation benumbed by the horror and cynicism of Vietnam it may not cause much stir, but it is a stiff dose of much of the worst possibilities in human culture. Culture, social behavior, mark you, not individual bestialities. Sawny Bean or Jack the Ripper we may laugh off; Tenochtitlan, Belsen and Hiroshima are on everyone's conscience, for to belong to the human race is to share the nature that made them possible.

What could have been an ordinary enough story in a science fiction framework of future political and business machinations, with three fugitives subverting a backward planet in a kind of plot done before, becomes a nightmare of personal involvement in an utterly evil culture. To read it is a catharsis not readily paralleled in literature. And incidentally there is, included in the picture of collapse and regeneration of character under stress of circumstance, the moral crisis of a ruthless egotist discovering the need and ability to love a human being: which is one of the things that humanity is all about.

-- The Bo'sun

LOOKING BACKWARD

January 1960 was the last issue of Astounding Science Fiction to bear that title: from February on it was metamorphosed through weird intermediate forms like Astounding Science Fact Fiction into the semantic blank Analog Science Fact / Science Fiction. Astounding was an unfortunate word, but thirty years of using it had not killed the magazine. Analog was at the time easily the silliest title ever -- no intelligible explanation of it has ever been offered -- although since then Gamma has nosed it out. Ten years, and the magazine is still in business. It shows that titles are not as important as you might think. Campbell undoubtedly thinks it shows that he was right in adopting it, and it is hard to argue otherwise.

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Now take Ross Rocklynne. Ted White's introduction to his unpalatable but illuminating glimpse of the future, Moon Trash, in the Jan Amazing, notes that he first appeared in the mid-1930's (it was in the Aug 1935 Astounding) and commends to us "the rarity of Rocklynne's considerable talents". Yes indeed. He is incredibly underrated: probably because he has never had a book published, though I don't think you'll find him mentioned in what little has been written on the history of the magazines.

His first story, Into the Darkness, was evidently too far out for Sloan or Tremaine in 1934; Hornig took it for Wonder in 1936 but the magazine folded first. Finally Pohl's Astonishing ran it in June 1940. It was the story of one of a race of energy beings living in space from the viewpoint of one of them. As with praying mantises their males did not survive mating, a fairly shock-

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ing surprise ending for the time. Among at least ninety short stories are many that deserve collecting, notably some ingenious scientific problem pieces. Two, At the Center of Gravity and And Then there was One, investigated conditions in a hollow planetoid; Time Wants a Skeleton was an ingenious adaptation of a detective plot to time travel, in which a stranded group know that one will not survive; The Immortal was perhaps the best of several considering physiological effects of space.

Rocklynne was born in 1913, which exhausts our factual knowledge of him. His work deserves a little more recognition.

-- G.S.

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