

Science Fiction NEWS

No. 27

March 1971

CURRENT SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS

AMOSOFF, Nikolai

NOTES FROM THE FUTURE. Simon & Schuster 1970.
384 p. HC \$6.95; J.Cape 1970. HC A\$5-00. Trans.
from Russian by George St. George.

Reviews: Library Journal Jly 1970 p. 2512;
National Review 25 Aug 1970 p. 903; Newsweek
13 Jly 1970 p. 100; Australian 17 Apr 1971;
p. 20; Sun-Herald, Sydney, 11 Apr 1971 p. 51

ANDERSON, Colin

MAGELLAN. Sphere 1971. 189 p. PB 25np. (1st
Walker 1970; Gollancz 1970)

Review: SF News Dec 1970 p. 6

BRUNNER, John [Kilian Houston] 1934-

The TRAVELER IN BLACK. Ace (82210) 1971. 9-222 p.
PB. Four connected stories: Imprint of Chaos;
Break the Door of Hell; The Wager lost by winning;
Dread Empire.

HEINLEIN, Robert A[nson] 1907-

BETWEEN PLANETS. Ace (05500) 1971. 7-190 p. PB
95c. (1st Scribner 1951; Gollancz 1968. Short
version in Blue Book as Planets in Combat. In
German as Zwischen den Planeten) Juvenile.

Current books

HEINLEIN, Robert A. Between Planets contd.

Reviews: Astounding US Mch 1952; Galaxy US Feb 1952; NY Times 11 Nov 1951 p. 20; NY Herald Tribune 11 Nov 1951 p. 22; SF News this issue p. 8

-- RED PLANET. Ace (71140) 1971. 7-189 p. PF 95c.
(1st Scribner 1949; Gollancz 1963; Scribner PB 1964; Pan PB 1967. In French as La Planette Rouge; in German as Der rote Planet)

-- The STAR BEAST. Ace (78000) 1970. 7-253 p. PB 95c. (1st Scribner 1954. In Magazine of Fantasy & SF US May-Jly 1954, Aust. 4-6, as Star LummoX)
Reviews: Astounding US Apr 1955; Galaxy US Mch 1955; SF Qrly May 1955; N.Y. Times 14 Nov 54; SF News this issue p. 9

HERBERT, Frank [Patrick]

WHIPPING STAR. Putnam 1970. 186 p. HC \$4.95;
Berkley Medallion (S1909) 1970. 176 p. PB 75c.
(In If Jan-Apr 1970) Review: Analog Nov 1970 p. 29

LUNDWALL, Sam J.

ALICE'S WORLD. b/w NO TIME FOR HEROES. Ace (58830) 1971. 122, 131 p. PB 75c

McAPP, C. C. [i.e. Carroll M. Capps, 1917?-1971]

RECALL NOT EARTH. Dell (7281) 1970. 192 p. PB 60c.

McCAFFREY, Anne

The SHIP WHO SANG. Rapp 1971. 349 p. HC £1.80
(1st Walker 1969) Based on short of same title.
Review: Galaxy Jly 1970 p. 102

contd. p. 12

BINARY Z
by John Rankine

SF Book Club

This book is a real surprise. Or it is to me at any rate; it is far removed from Interstellar Two-Five, the last of this author's works I had the doubtful pleasure to read. But it is also far removed in spirit from most books with which one might compare it.

The plot...well, no, first of all take the basic idea, which is not what you could call a sensationally new one. In fact, one of the most overworked themes in SF, so much so that it has dropped almost completely from sight, is the inhuman artifact dug up out of the ground and proving a menace to be coped with. We got a bit tired of them before 1939. But that doesn't mean there is no more to say, far from it. Why, the possibilities are endless for intelligent treatment.

What was wrong with most of the old stories about aggressive robots of extraterrestrial origin was the failing of too much SF, and the hardest one to avoid; oversimplification. Once the alien started doing its thing and making like a menace, everything else stopped and everyone dropped what he was doing to cope, flee or otherwise react. Now, we all know that's not how it works. Life goes on, and nobody reacts beyond mild excitement until directly affected. Even something extreme like an e-t robot would be fitted into everyone's world picture and taken for granted after the first shock.

Rankine understands this. More important, he understands just how a hostile e-t robot would be coped with, and the result is a very different story from the old formula.

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On the other hand, he doesn't go to the other extreme and give us people blandly going about their business quite unrelated to the menace. It is there as part of the setting throughout the book even though much of the action is motivated by other forces.

There is the society, the local polity, the institutions and activities, confronted by the need to handle the robot, and some of the individuals directly involved. The viewpoint is that of the school principal whose existing problems are compounded when the thing is dug up in new building operations, and the book incidentally has a lot to say about the social realities of mass education. There is a lot of what it is tempting to call satire, but in fact is realistic observation.

Altogether, science fiction at its best.

By the way, I notice that those unattractive SFBC jackets have recently been actually illustrating something in the book, which is a change.

-- Cleve Gilbert

ON OUR WAY TO THE FUTURE

ed. Terry Carr

Ace PB (62940)

9-253 p. 75c.

Ten stories "never before in paperback". Not by any means a milestone, this collection rates more marks for earnestness of purpose than originality or real excitement. Briefly, in my order of preference:

Be Merry, by Algis Budrys: A realistic, compassionate look at the aftermath of world catastrophe, with emphasis on the humans -- and aliens -- involved.

Goblin Night, by James H. Schmitz: One of the Telzey Amberdon adventure series, a well-construct-

ed battle of wits between a 15 year old "psi" talented girl and two monsters -- one of them human.

King Solomon's Ring, by Roger Zelazny: written in 1963 before the author had built his reputation. Off-beat duel between two paraling which ends in a curious transference of personality, told entertainingly through the medium of dialogue.

Cyclops, by Fritz Leiber: A nightmare creature menaces the crew of a spaceship. Plenty of atmosphere, not much else.

A Taste for Dostoevsky, by Brian W. Aldiss: a misfit man travels back in time to meet the Russian writer. Fragmented and somewhat obscure.

A Better Mousehole, by Edgar Pangborn: Alien invasion of Earth on a mini scale -- one household of blue bugs. Viewpoint sympathetic, plot negligible.

Greenslaves, by Frank Herbert: written in 1965, before Dune. Ecological dramatics acted out against a South American backdrop.

Sundance, by Robert Silverberg: Another plea for conservation, this time a breed of animals who might possibly be classes as people.

Under the Dragon's Tail, by Philip Latham: the sometimes amusing difficulties of an assistant director of a planetarium who predicts the asteroid Icarus will collide with Earth. Pay-off spoilt by lack of technique.

Ballenger's People, by Kris Neville: confrontation between a man who regards himself as a nation of diverse people, and a lawyer who regards him as a maniac. Doesn't quite come off.

To sum up: maintains a good average standard -- no fireworks.

-- Angus Gordon

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DARK PIPER
by Andre Norton

Acc FB (13795)
7-220 p. 60c

What did eventually happen to the children who followed the Pied Piper of Hamelin? Dark Piper takes for its model the old tale of the Pied Piper. The story adheres very loosely to the original, in that the sole children who are to survive the annihilation of the planet Beltane follow Griss Lugard, the Dark Piper of the title, into a maze of caves. There they survive the massacre of the human population of the planet by boatloads of refugees who wish the planet for themselves.

The 'piper' theme seems a little forced. Early in the book, the children come across Lugard playing his pipe and thereby attracting various animals to him. As soon as he stops playing the animals flee. Both Lugard and pipe die relatively early in the book. Apart from giving the story the hook to hang the piper analogy on, the pipe has very little to do with the book, and it could well be removed without any noticeable difference to the plot.

The children of Hamelin entered a mountain which closed behind them, leaving the parents to mourn and regret their folly in refusing to pay the piper his just due. The children of Beltane enter the caves and mourn later the folly of their parents in refusing to heed the warning of the piper, and dying for their folly.

Perhaps to tie in with the end of the Pied Piper legend (the fat old rat who was unable to follow the Piper to promised delights, and the little crippled boy also unable to follow the Piper into the mountain) we have the mutant animals who, although left behind, nonetheless survive the

massacre. They are shown as approaching a certain humanity in their evolution, and as the book ends the children attempt to help their development. This could be the motive for installing mutant animals in the story, but again this seems a little forced.

The back cover blurb, together with the quote on the front cover from the Young Readers' Review, leaves me in some doubt as to whether the book was aimed at children or adults. If for children, then it is excellent fare. If for adults, then some fault may be found with it -- it lacks depth, certain minor themes are not followed up, and it certainly is not a book which one cannot put down until the last page is read. Balancing these faults is one outstanding virtue sadly lacking in the last two novels put out by Ace which I reviewed: it is well written.

-- Denise Palmer

The ROLLING STONES.	Ace PB (73440)	7-255p.	95c
BETWEEN PLANETS.	Ace PB (05500)	7-190p.	95c
The STAR BEAST.	Ace PB (78000)	7-253p.	95c

by Robert Heinlein.

All of these new editions, alas, identify Heinlein on the covers as "author of Stranger in a Strange Land" as if that were a recommendation. All of them are far different from the grotesque mysticism of that book and the recent I Will Fear No Evil. All were published as juveniles but have more or less adult interest besides.

The Rolling Stones is the most conventionally juvenile, with very much a formula plot. If you can take the space cruising family bit you will like this one, which is well put to-

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gether, with all the customary elements. The technology is believable if the economics and sociology are suspect: shipping goods commercially between planets? Interplanetary tariffs? Asteroid mining? By private enterprise?

Between Planets is more like the stories that made Heinlein's original name in SF. A year earlier (1951) than *The Rolling Stones*, it is a much more successful book on both juvenile and adult levels. The main drawback is its dating. When it was written the evidence on conditions on Venus was already strongly against the classical picture of a wet planet comparable to Earth's wettest tropics in climate, but since it was indirect, inconclusive and not widely known to the public many SF writers were still writing transplanted jungle stories or, like Heinlein, using the supposed conditions more imaginatively. Now although Venus is still an enigma everything we know adds up to something quite different from anything on Earth, definitely not a world to live on without much difficulty.

Here, then, we have a wet, swampy world thinly colonised with frontier settlements -- and with intelligent dragonlike natives. It is a time of upheaval with the revolt of Venus against the authority of Earth -- and here Heinlein parts company with your juvenile writer to put in enough background, built up in details throughout the book, to show what that authority and rebellion mean. Heinlein's future worlds often have a grim side, arising from an awareness of factors like overpopulation and of the bases of social institutions: when he introduces censorship, official propaganda, the mechanisms of a ruling establishment maintaining itself in a theoretical democracy, he knows what he's talking about. You may say it is

simple enough to project contemporary America into the 22nd Century, but not many writers, particularly those writing for teenagers, can go that far with any understanding.

The Star Beast is better known than the other two, with a somewhat more advanced story set considerably in the future, in a time of established interstellar transactions. A long-lived extra-terrestrial brought home as a pet and kept for generations until a fleet comes to demand the surrender of a kidnapped infant is the center of action. More tightly and strongly plotted than the other two discussed here, with every incident relevant to its development. There is one minor bit of cheating in the early misdirection by which the Triceratops-sized Lummo is called "he" in early chapters, and one or two other points where we are not given all the picture at first, but it's not meant as a detective story. On the other hand, you will find many incidental virtues in the book: the social changes, for instance, show some original thought.

— G. S.

The GOD KILLERS
by James Ross

Sidgwick & Jackson
9-190 p. 25/-

This seems to be a first effort, the name James Ross being unknown. Though I notice that the copyright credit is for two personnel called Halliwell and Darrington whom I don't know either. However that may be, the book certainly reads like the work of someone quite unacquainted with modern SF. There are some inexcusable blunders that would never have passed an editor who was half awake; for instance, early in the book an anti-gravity device is demonstrated -- in a space

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station.

It is by no means a straightforward novel. The action switches back and forth between several places and viewpoints, even times in the first half of the book. But complication is not always the same as depth, and obscurity all too often hides a lack of substance.

Fact the book is about, briefly, is the conflict of two predatory colonial powers, Earth and an independent offshoot of Earth in a time of wide interstellar colonisation, within the framework of an interstellar quasi-government, a Council without coercive power. Right here a number of fallacies in the basic assumptions can be found on reflection, but the concept is common enough in SF to be accepted. There is an explicit cause for conflict in a valuable planet of disputed ownership, and an unstated cause in a far greater prize, a derelict non-human, extra-galactic ship. With this background we follow the machinations of the good and bad guys at the top. There is a rather primitive view of the operations of the Galactic Council, its representatives behaving like the common stereotype of the American Congressman in an unconvincing atmosphere of intrigue and corruption.

But another plot element is a form of ritualised warfare reduced to a duel of two one-man forces when discussion fails. And as we might expect, cheating is part of the game. Altogether, not a morally uplifting book.

Perhaps the next book will be better.

-- G. S.

LOOKING BACKWARD

The first time the words "science fiction" appeared in the title of a science fiction magazine. Not 1926 when the first science fiction magazine began -- not 1929 when Gernsback started his second group of magazines and changed from his earlier coinage "scientifiction" -- it was March 1938 when Astounding Stories changed to Astounding Science Fiction. Wesso's cover illustrated Something from Jupiter by Dow Elstar (Raymond Z. Gallun), which is still a good yarn, as are several others in the issue. R. De Witt Miller's The Master shall not die! (rejuvenation by transfusion -- a 19th century concept long known as fallacious) was later blown up to book length as The Man who lived forever. There were three new authors: William C. Becket with Duel in the Space Lanes (he never tried again); Kent Casey with Flareback; John Victor Peterson with Martyrs don't mind dying, a time paradox story.

In the other magazines -- well, neither of the three (count 'em) other SF magazines had a March issue. Lots of things were about to happen, but just then the field was at a low ebb.

The first and only magazine called simply Science Fiction had its first issue in March 1939. It wasn't outstanding. There were other first issues in March, one to be noted being If in 1952. It had a strong flavor of Amazing with stories by Howard Browne, Ray Palmer, Rog Phillips and Richard Shaver. Incidentally, Mr. Shaver's thing about evil beings living in caves and causing war, heart failure and ingrown toenails (or something like that) began with the story I Remember Lemuria in Amazing, March 1945. Neurotics claiming it as factual and offering further evidence looked like becoming quite a movement for a while.

Current books

MEAD, [Edward] Shepherd, 1914-

THE BIG BALL OF WAX. Ace (05785) 1970. 5-222 p.
PB 75c. (1st Simon & Schuster 1954; Boardman 1955;
Ballantine PB 1956)

Reviews: Astounding US Aug 1955, Br. Jan 1956;
Galaxy US Oct 1955; New Worlds no. 42; Library
Journal 1 Oct 1954 p. 1825; NY Times 19 Dec 1954
NY Herald Tribune 31 Oct 1954 p. 13; Saturday
Review 23 Oct 1954 p. 17

MILLER, Jimmy

The BIG WIN. Bantam (N5651) 1970. 196 p. PB 95c.
(1st Knopf 1969)

Review: Australian 21 Nov 1970 p. 22

RANKINE, John [i.e. Douglas Rankine Mason]

BINARY Z. Dobson 1969, SF Book Club 1970. 190 p.
HC. Reviews: Sydney Morning Herald 18 Apr 1970
p. 21; SF News this issue p. 3

RUSS, Joanna

AND CHAOS DIED. Ace (02268) 1970. 189 p. PB 75c.

Review: Analog Feb 1971 p. 167

SHAW, Bob

The TWO-TIMERS. Pan 1971. 139 p. PB 25 np. (1st
Ace PB 1968; Gollancz 1969)

Reviews: Analog Mch 1969 p. 174; Galaxy Feb 1969
p. 188; Mag of F&SF Feb 1969 p. 22; ASFA Journal
v. 2 no. 1, 1970 p. 25

STURGEON, Theodore, 1918-

STURGEON IN ORBIT. Gollancz 1970. 192 p. HC 28/-.
(1st Pyramid PB 1964) 5 stories: The Incubi of
Parallel X; The Heart; Extrapolation [Beware the
Fury]; The Wages of Synergy; Make room for me.

STURGEON, Theodore. Sturgeon in Orbit. contd.

Reviews: Amazing Jly 1964 p. 126; Analog
Sep 1964 p. 88; Mag of F&SF Mch 1965 p. 54

--- The SYNTHETIC MAN. Pyramid (X2007) 1970.
5-174 p. PB 60c. (Reissue of 1957 ed. 1st as
The Dreaming Jewels; in Fantastic Adventures
Feb 1970; Greenberg 1950; Nova PB 1955. French
as Le cristal qui sonne)
Reviews: Astounding US Apr 1951 p. 138; Fan-
tastic May 1965 p. 124; SF News Nov 1969 p.18

VANCE, Jack

EMPHYRIO. Dell 1970. 222 p. PB 75c. (1st in
Fantastic Jly-Aug 1969; Doubleday 1969)

Reviews: Analog Oct 1970 p. 165; Mag of
F&SF Jan 1970 p. 40

NON-FICTION OF INTEREST

BAXTER, John [Martin]

SCIENCE FICTION IN THE CINEMA. A.S.Barnes and
Zwemmer 1970. 240 p. HC & PB. The first sub-
stantial treatment of this field.

KINKAD-WEEKES, Mark and GREGOR, Ian

WILLIAM GOLDING; A Critical Study. Faber
1970. 257 p. PB 12/- (1st 1967) Golding is
the author of the marginal Lord of the Flies
and Envoy Extraordinary, also known as The
Brass Butterfly.

LEE, Robert A[lan]

ORWELL'S FICTION. University of Notre Dame
Press. xvii, 188 p. 81/-. Still more on Or-
well. And that works out at about 5 cents a
page.

Obituary:

C. C. MacAPP

A publicity-shy San Franciscan, Carroll M. Capps, who wrote as C. C. MacApp, died on January 15. He was in his fifties, was apparently a disabled war veteran, and began writing in 1960. He was the author of several paperbacks and some forty short stories, mainly in *If* and *Galaxy*. Not a leading figure, he wrote some agreeable pieces of entertainment. *A Flask of Fine Arc-turan*, *The Hides of Marrech* and *And All the Earth a Grave* come to mind.

"OH GOOD, WE'VE BEEN NOTICED"

See *Time*, Mch 29, p. 66 for a tiresome bit of pretentious drivel under the silly heading *Future Grok*. Wildly generalising on the state of science fiction, but wasting much space on Heinlein's mystical novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*, admirable but hardly SF, and other byways. For a rare collection of big names, try this: "writers from Poe and Hawthorne to William Burroughs, Anthony Burgess and Doris Lessing have written what could be called science fiction..." If we're going to talk about what might be called (by whom?) science fiction we may as well give up.

FURTHER REVIEWS

Since these books were reported in our current listing these further reviews have been noted.

- Abe, Kobo. Inter Ice Age 4
Library Journal 15.11.70 p. 334; Saturday Review
26.9.70 p. 37
- Anderson, Poul. Satan's World
If Jly/Aug 1970 p. 148; Mag of F&SF Jly 1970 p.42
- Compton, D. G. The Steel Crocodile
Mag of F&SF Aug 1970 p. 60
- East, Julius. The League of Grey-Eyed Women
Mag of F&SF Aug 1970 p. 59
- Finney, Jack. Time and Again
NY Times 2.8.70 p. 24; Time 20.7.70 p. 76
- Gordon, Rex. The Yellow Fraction
If Jly/Aug 1970 p. 151
- Hale, John. The Paradiso Man
Library Journal 15.1.70 p. 176; New Statesman
26.9.69 p. 430; NY Times 14.12.69 p. 46; Times
Lit. Suppt., London, 9.10.69 p. 1145
- Hamilton, Edmond. Return to the Stars
If Jly/Aug 1970 p. 150
- Harrison, Harry. The Daleth Effect
Analog Sep 1970 p. 165
- Lymington, John. Ten Million Years to Friday
Mag of F&SF Aug 1970 p. 58
- McCaffrey, Anne. The Ship who sang
Analog Sep 1970 p. 167; Mag of F&SF Jly 1970 p. 40
- Moskowitz, Sam ed. Under the Moons of Mars
If Nov/Dec 1970 p. 168
- Tucker, Wilson. The Year of the Quiet Sun
If Nov/Dec 1970 p. 167

S C I E N C E F I C T I O N N E W S

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The Association aims to bring together people interested in science fiction in order to promote the study and appreciation of the field. For further information write to the Secretary, G. B. Stone. Annual subscription is three dollars.

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SYDNEY MEETINGS

Local branches are contemplated where there are enough ASFA members, but to date only Sydney has a functioning branch. Meetings are held monthly at various addresses. For details contact the Sydney Branch Secretary, Michael McGuinness, Box 4788, GPO, phone 8071449.

Dates scheduled for 1971:

- May 8
- June 12
- July 10
- August 14
- September 18
- October 16
- November 6 and 27