

# SCIENCE FICTION *News*

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## CURRENT SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS

ABLEMAN, Paul

The TWILIGHT OF THE VILP. Sphere. 140 p. PB  
25 np. (1st Gollancz 1969)

BIGGLE, Lloyd

The WORLD MENDERS. Doubleday. 181 p. HC \$4.95

DICK, Philip K[indred] 1928-

EYE IN THE SKY. Arrow. 256 p. PB 30 np. (1st  
Ace 1957, reissue 1968) SF -- sort of.

Reviews: P&SF Jly 1957; Venture Sep 1957

DEURY, Allen

The THRONE OF SATURN, a novel of Space and  
Politics. Doubleday. xii, 588 p. HC \$7.95.  
Brouhaha centred on the first manned Mars mis-  
sion, by the author of Advise and Consent.

Reviews: Library Jnl. 15 Mch p. 976; National  
Review 6 Apr p. 377; NY Times 14 Feb p. 6

FARMER, Philip José, 1918-

BEHIND THE WALLS OF TERRA. Ace. (71135). 188 p.  
PB 75c. Review: Analog May p. 165

HEINLEIN, Robert [Anson] 1907-

ASSIGNMENT IN ETERNITY. New English Lib. 5-127p.  
PB 25 np. Contents: novel Gulf and short Else-  
when (Other eds. have two more stories)

HIGH, Philip E[mpson] 1914-

BUTTERFLY PLANET. Hale. 160 p. HC £1.40

Current Books

- KNIGHT, Damon [Francis] 1922- ed.  
ORBIT [2]. Panther. 189 p. PB 30 np. (1st Putnam  
1967; Rapp 1968)
- LEIBER, Fritz, 1910-  
A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING TEXAS. Mayflower. 222 p.  
PB 30 np. (in Galaxy Jly-Sept 1968. Walker 1969;  
Gollancz 1969; SF Book Club 1970)  
Reviews: Analog Jan 1970 p. 165; F&SF Nov 1969  
p. 49
- SLEEK, Clifford D[onald] 1904-  
CITY. Sphere, 248 p. PB 30 np. Also Acc. (1962).  
5-255 p. PB 75c. (1st Gnome 1952; Weidenfeld 1954;  
Porma 1954; Four Square 1965; Acc 1957, 1967.  
Also in Pollution Omnibus, reviewed this issue)  
Reviews: Astounding US Jan 1953 p. 160; Galaxy  
US Oct 1952, Br. No. 1; SF Plus Mch 1953; SF  
Adventures Feb 1953; Space SF Mch 1953; Auth-  
entic No. 44; Nebula No. 8; N.Y. Times 14 Sep  
1952; Saturday Rev. 10 Jan 1953
- SIODMAK, Curt, 1902-  
HAUSER'S MEMORY. Tandem. 134 p. PB 25 np. (1st  
Putnam 1968; H. Jenkins 1969; Berkley PB 1969)  
Reviews: Analog Apr 1969 p. 161; Amazing Sep  
1968 p. 141
- TUCKER, [Arthur] Wilson, 1914-  
The YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN. R. Hale. 221 p. HC  
\$1.20 (1st Ace 1970) Reviews: Analog Oct 1970  
p. 167; If Nov/Dec 1970 p. 167; SF News Sep  
1970 p. 7

FAREWELL, FANTASTIC VENUS!

Panther PB

ed. Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison

269 p. A95c

An excellent idea, which incredibly has never been done, a collection of SF about Venus. In fact, it may be the first collection about any planet: even Mars does not seem to have been treated. Along with the fiction, which includes the most obvious writers who could hardly be left out and some personal choices that may not seem equally appropriate to all of us, there are some factual selections ranging from brilliant to trivial and rather lacking in balance. In the editors' notes linking the stories many others not chosen are at least mentioned briefly, a cunning move.

What we have to call primitive speculation is represented by a short summary with quotes from John Munro's mystically sentimental 1897 novel *A Trip to Venus*, and an extract from George Griffith's little earthier *A Honeymoon in Space* of 1901, both interesting period pieces with a quaintness that makes their solemn absurdity bearable. Not much more realistic is the episode from Burroughs' *Pirates of Venus* describing Napier's first landing and meeting with the fascinating tree-dwellers who were left in the background for the rest of his somatotonic adventure series. C.S. Lewis' *Perelandra* is fuzzy-headed theologising with the thinnest framework of setting, but the bit chosen is an arresting glimpse of the watry planet Venus as often taken to be. Stapledon also assumed the ocean world in his monumental *Last and First Men*, from which the entire Venus section is extracted. An admirable introduction to the Stapledonian

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imagination, with a cosmic view of humanity through eons of history and evolution into successive forms.

There is Poul Anderson, of course, with *The Big Rain* and *Sister Planet*, both with a background of terraforming projects on two different concepts of Venus, the more modern dustbowl and the more traditional ocean world. The latter is one of a few stories to take into account the violation of alien ecology that could be involved in terraforming, here genocide of a dolphinlike intelligent race. Arthur Clarke's well known *Before Eden* makes the same point. The other stories are an unimportant item, *Alchemy*, by John and Dorothy de Courcey, which could as well be set anywhere off Earth, and an extract from a well forgotten novel, *S. Makepeace Lott's Escape to Venus*. Plus what is claimed to be an anonymous report of an LSD trip (well, pigs might fly), which has nothing to do with Venus the planet but reflects some quick boning up on classical mythology, and two of the silly little texts that accompanied Frank R. Paul's whimsical paintings of life on imaginary worlds on the *Palmer* magazines.

The non-fiction is mostly rather fragmentary selections from writers of some standing. *The Destinies of the Stars*, by Svante Arrhenius, is a brief example of the reasoning from the little information available on which the traditional picture of Venus rested. Some of the other sources -- Fontenelle, Flammarion and others -- are mentioned in the notes.

If you miss Heinlein, at least his *Logic of Empire* rates a mention, as do the *Kuttners' Clash by Night and Fury*, van Vogt's *A Can of Paint and World of Null-A*, and stories by Fearn, Chandler, Kummer, Shelton, Bradbury, Simak, Blish and Knight, Pohl and Kornbluth. A few others that come to mind are Malcolm Jameson, P. Schuyler Miller, William Tenn, Ar-

thur K. Barnes, Charles Cloukey, R. F. Starzl, Ralph Milne Farley, Roger Zelazny...which is only to say that this book does not exhaust the field but only opens it up. It does make a good start and is recommended.

There is just one curious thing in the generally informative and balanced editorial matter: the eccentric attempt to make "Cytherean" refer to the planet under discussion, a silly idea that seems to have originated with Patrick Moore. Amateur Freudians can divert themselves by meditating on the mental processes involved.

-- G.S.

#### CHRONOCULES

by D. G. Compton

Ace PB (10480)

5-255 p. 75c

Don't be put off by the title.

This is an immensely enjoyable book with an easy flowing style. The characterisation is good, especially that of the central figure, a village idiot by the unlikely name of Roses Varoo. The plot is only fair, but the way it's written makes up for it. I wanted to go on reading to find out what would happen, and as the story built up to the promise of an exciting climax, I was literally unable to put the book down, thus forgetting to fetch the dry washing in, missing my shower and being half an hour late for an engagement.

Chronocules (defined in the book as particles of time) has the alternative title *Escape into Tomorrow* printed on the back cover. I like neither title and would have preferred something more eye-catching to tempt me at the bookstore. It is sobering in this moment of enthusiasm to realise that

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had I not been asked to review this book I would not have chosen to read it.

The plot concerns an Experimental Research Village set up by an eccentric millionaire who, typically, wants to live forever. Laboratories are set up to research ways and means of saving him and the other inhabitants from the inevitable decay of body cells which precedes death. Naturally time travel is considered, although the chief scientist maintains this to be an inaccurate description of what happens when he succeeds in making an object vanish -- we travel in time: it doesn't.

Cats and dogs are brought into the experiment, and when one dies Roses reacts simply and logically (for him). The laboratory is a dangerous place where they kill little spotty dogs. There are more experiments, more adjustments, and the machine awaits the first human volunteer. It would suffice it for me to tell you any more of the plot: suffice it to say, there is a beginning, a middle and an end, within the confines of a plot which concerns time travel. When does the book finish? The end could well be the beginning...

One thing I may not have made clear. The book is as a humorous one, not for those who prefer meaty treatises of a dedicatedly scientific nature. There is also more than a dash of that three-letter word.

-- Audrey Tarver

FAREWELL EARTH'S BLISS  
by D. G. Compton

Ace PB (22830)  
188 p. 75c

This new novel by Compton displays his versatility of style. It has none of the humorous whimsey of Chronocules, and I really

couldn't take it seriously either. It tells the story of Mars as a penal colony and a group of two two dozen deportees. How they survive their first year on the planet is the theme, and the various ingenious fates of the non-survivors keep up the interest.

The book loses its pull towards the end, and I only kept reading because there were a few riddles. Fortunately the action picks up in the last chapter, and the climax is very good.

Verdict: worth reading once, but not particularly memorable.

-- Audrey Tarver

#### A SCIENCE FICTION OMNIBUS ON POLLUTION

(Make Room! Make Room! by Harry Harrison; Shark Ship, by C. M. Kornbluth; City, by Clifford D. Simak)

Sidgwick & Jackson

8-222, 36, 5-255 p, \$6-25

Come on, now, Sidgwick and Jackson, this is more than enough. Pollution? Milking a trend for all it's worth is all very well, but none of these works is about pollution! The first is about overpopulation, among other things, and I suppose that's people as pollution, but it has only glancing relevance. The second is also about overpopulation and deliberate destruction of ecology for restricted utilisation, not at all the same subject. The third has nothing to do with the pollution question at all. So what game are you playing?

And one more thing. These omnibus volumes of yours are usually reissues of three complete books, and excellent value they are; on the jacket of this one you say "Three full length novels". "sk. 36

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pages, 13,500 words, a full length novel? It won't do. And a final point, by the way: that damned silly picture on the jacket -- don't you think it lowers the tone just a little?

All right, then, here we have a reissue of two books -- City is not properly speaking a novel, there is no accepted term for the form, but it's a book right enough -- both well worth having, plus a short story which while it doesn't stand much examination is an interesting piece of Kornbluth at his gloomiest. If you have been reading science fiction for very long you almost certainly have City in one edition or other already, of course.

Make Room! Make Room! is a novel of crime and detection and people involved in a complex chain of events on both sides of the law. But its background is the New York of 1999, a nightmare vision of a megalopolis of thirty-five million that will haunt you. Every trend points to it, and the book qualifies as a warning. If you don't care about the population problem, reading it may make you think again. Its ideas are old in science fiction, if not in public consciousness -- the dehumanising effect of the smothering millions, making nonsense of individuality, human dignity and moral codes; the impotence of every victim of the system and the loss of any community spirit and standard to inspire loyalty; the degeneration of political life, leaving only graft and fumbling bureaucracy, even authoritarianism meaningless; the isolation of the city from its hinterland drifting towards armed conflict. At the same time, even if you're insensitive to it all, an engrossing thriller.

Shark Ship (originally titled Reap the Dark Tide) has too much material for its length, and might have grown into a better novel than some of



the half-realised Kornbluth books given time. As it stands it is an interesting fragment in two parts. First, a picture of a grisly future culture living permanently afloat in a hundred thousand-odd ships, sustained by plankton, a grim projection of the kind of ruthless exploitation of the sea that was being touted as the wave (you should excuse the expression) of the future in the mid-fifties to get around the obvious coming food shortage. All such thinking is on the wrong track to begin with, since the problem is not that there is not enough food but that there are too many mouths; but it was fashionable for a while to gloss over the real problem and talk about increasing the available food resources to cope until somehow or other the population would eventually stabilise. One great relatively untapped source was claimed to be the sea, and the difficulties involved in wringing enough out of it to make any difference to the world problem were airily dismissed. Arthur Clarke's *The Deep Range* was among the more intellectual works based on the idea. Kornbluth realised that to exploit the life of the sea fully would mean destroying most of it as too expensive to process, leaving little but plankton. It is a worrying thought that there are undoubtedly many who would support a program like that. When such a ship is forced by breakdown to abandon its endless routine of staying alive and in desperation make contact with the land from which the plankton-eaters have been banned for generations, it finds a culture near death from internal attrition. Its history is sketched only briefly, and does not carry much conviction -- but there is a great deal to think about here.

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City is in complete contrast in concept and style to both Harrison and Kornbluth: not a novel, but an evolutionary series of eight stories written over as many years, obviously not planned in the first place but growing as new developments suggested themselves. Collected as a book, they are tied together with notes by a learned but somewhat myopic scholar of a remote post-human future which add another dimension to the whole. The original story from which the series takes its name is not very significant; its picture of the withering away of urban life in a world of general sufficiency and ease of communications merely helping to justify the decentralised culture of the following episodes. In Huddling Place the territorial instinct has ceased to be aggressive but men tend to be frozen to their own locality: a man's psychopathic inability to take a long journey has far-reaching consequences. In Census the fragmentation of society has gone far enough to be dangerous, and new factors are seen: superhuman Mutants, intelligent dogs and, possibly, ants. In Desertion and Paradise a new world is opened up in the development of a biological adaptation of man to life on Jupiter, and thenceforward Earth becomes a forgotten backwater although still the scene of the series. In Hobbies and Aesop the forces in motion eventually remove man altogether from the scene, leaving the dogs and other intelligent species of vertebrates to have, in the final story, 'Trouble with Ants. Despite gaps, unanswered questions and loose ends enough for a dozen books, it forms a surprisingly logical whole and makes compelling reading.

A volume worth having.

-- G. S.

August Derleth made an important contribution to science fiction, although his main interests were in other fields. A prolific writer of novels, short stories, plays, biographies, verse, etc, he once replied to being described as a one-man fiction factory: "I do not write in order to justify any name or title; I write because I must, because I have plots and material to keep me writing for more years than I can possibly live, and I want to put it down as quickly as I can." A recognised expert on the regional literature and history of Wisconsin, his main field, he also had an important part in the rehabilitation of weird and supernatural fiction in respectable circles.

Writing for *Weird Tales* in the 30's, he became a close friend of H. P. Lovecraft, and his efforts with Donald Wandrei to collect the works of Lovecraft as a suitable memorial led to the establishment of Arkham House, which publishing writers such as Bradbury, Bloch, Leiber and van Vogt led the way for the other publishers who first put a substantial amount of modern science fiction into book form in the few years after the war.

Derleth went on to edit a valuable series of SF collections -- *Beyond Time and Space*; *Far Boundaries*; *Beyond Time and Space*; *Beachheads in Space*; *Strange Ports of Call*; *Worlds of Tomorrow* -- which expressed his concept of the literary place of the field, expressing trends traceable in the last century and earlier and related to the mystery and weird traditions in its antecedents. His helpful book *Writing Fiction* (1945) includes some of the earliest serious analysis of SF treated as a branch of "fantastic" fiction to see print.

As one of the earliest intelligent critics and editors of SF, Derleth was a valuable influence.

His sober and responsible approach with emphasis on literary values was in contrast to many of SF's advocates in a crucial period, and contributed to a better image.

Less active since the 50's, he continued to manage Arkham House and hold out against the unfortunate trends in fantasy in a quiet way, and some of his collections have seen new editions in recent years. He died after several heart attacks on July 5.

HENRY FITZGERALD HEARD, 1889-1971 - 82

H. F. Heard, alternatively known as Gerald, born in England and resident for some decades in California, was the author of a variety of works on philosophical and religious subjects besides some fiction, and was also known for one of the earliest books on the flying saucer phenomenon (he argued for visiting extraterrestrials, probably beelike creatures from Mars). One of his several detective novels had a scientific theme, A Taste for Honey; he also wrote a number of short stories of significance, such as The Great Fog, The Collector and Wingless Victory, and the novel of political oppression and its psychological meaning, Doppelgangers. He died in Santa Monica in August.

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