JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1979 NUMBER 29

# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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*NOISE LEVEL By John Brunner*

*Interviews:* ***JOHN BRUNNER*** ***MICHAEL MOORCOCK***
***HANK STINE***

*Orson Scott Card - Charles Platt - Darrell Schweitzer*
*Elton Elliott - Bill Warren*

# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

*Formerly THE ALIEN CRITIC*

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P.O. Box 11408
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PHONE: (503) 282-0381

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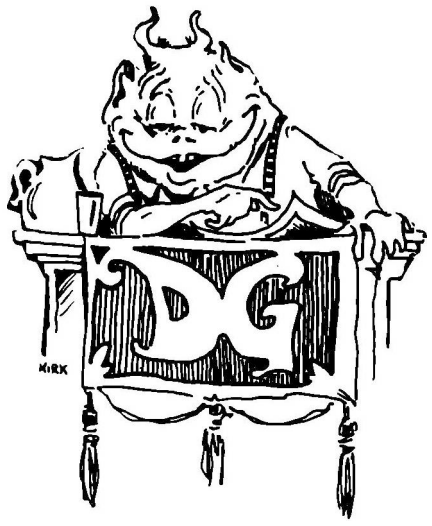
# ALIEN THOUGHTS



## BY THE EDITOR

10-21-78 I called Hank Stine, editor of GALAXY, a few days ago to find out when my next review column was due---the end of this month, it turned out---and to find out from the source what the GALAXY payment policy is for sure, since LOCUS had printed a story saying payment was shortly after publication and I had been told by Hank that payment was 72 hours after acceptance.

Hank confirmed the 'after acceptance' policy, and said that possibly Charlie Brown, publisher of LOCUS, had misunderstood him in the din of the Huckster room where they had talked. Whatever.

# DAMN! Something went crack in the Scriptomatic addressing machine when I started to run off the envelopes for the SFR #28 mailing this morning, and so that chore will have to wait till possibly Monday afternoon or night, making the "deadline" of a Friday, October 27 mailing rather chancey.

If your copy of #28 was later than usual by a few days, in November, now you know why.

And since there is a mail strike on in Canada, those subscribers... well, Ghod knows when they'll get their copies. I've been told to hold the Canada sacks back.

11-1-78 What is the future of science fiction? This topic has been used and abused for generations in fanzines.

Long-term, science fiction and fantasy have a steady future in a two-tier publishing existence. The lower tier will consist of hard-core genre sf as published now by the sf magazines and DAW and Ballantine and others. A steady market which will be helped by the "upper" tier of big best-seller sf novels and literary sf. Whether or not there will be a big, high-quality sf magazine like OMNI around for long is questionable. I think good sf stories can now appear in any big-circulation magazine.

OMNI I think will live or die on its hyped circulation and its advertising. The first issue is said to be a sell-out [as it should be if as reported $5 million was spent on advertising it]. The test will come with the next four or five issues. Unless the magazine holds its paid circulation at about 500,000, it will fail, and despite the publisher's vow to pour millions into it because he has faith in it, and wait five years for it to establish itself... Well, even PENTHOUSE can't stand that kind of long-term drain. Watch the total of advertising pages in OMNI; if the total drops in future issues by a large number...if the auto and liquor and hi-fi ads disappear....it's the end.

What is the short-term outlook for sf? Bad, I think. It's now obvious there will be a recession of unknown severity in 1979 now that the U.S. government has finally decided to "defend" the dollar and take a recession in '79 so it can re-inflate and hype the economy in time to make Carter's renomination and re-election possible in 1980.

There is a flood of sf in the publishing pipeline now that will carry through probably to mid-1979. Bad business in the first six months of the year will cause a retrenching and cutback in publishing plans and a stretch-out of lists. The last half of 1979 and perhaps the first half of 1980 will be slow for sf.

There is a possibility that the recession will deepen into a depression because of the underlying weakness of the economy [we're extremely vulnerable to a terrible debt liquidation---a tidal wave of bankruptcy--due to unprecedented bad foreign loans by multinational banks, business debt and staggering consumer debts]. If a deflation develops people will watch TV and forego buying magazines and books.

If a depression or a long-term stagnation occurrs, all publishing will suffer. And sf might be especially vulnerable if the mood of the country changes to a much more now-oriented, non-fantasy, down-to-earth orientation. Sf and fantasy might very quickly go out of fashion. On the other hand, we might see an even greater emphasis on sf and fantasy and occult in films & TV as people seek escape from grim reality [but cannot afford mags and books].

11-7-78 Let me lay upon you all a tale of modified woe. Spell it wo.

I have published CANNED MEAT, a PG or R-Rated sf novel (depending on your sophistication and morals) but the effort has been d-i-f-f-i-c-u-l-t because of miscalculation and mistake.

I planned on a wraparound cover and three interior full-page illos by Bruce Conklin. He came through beautifully. I planned on running off the text pages on my wonderful Gestetner 466, using 65# book paper. The art would be all offset, of course.

Lady Companion had all the stencils typed beautifully.

I put the first stencil on the machine, loaded the paper table with a ream of 65# ivory colored vellum paper...

And found the paper picked up too much offset (ink impressions from the preceding sheet as each new sheet is printed), making it unconscionable to print both sides of the paper.

So I bought another thirty reams of paper. [High-class: a novel with pages printed on only one side.]

But previously I had placed the artwork with Action Print to be run offand had provided them with a ream each of colored stock, including a ream of 11 x 17 for the wrap-around cover. The clerk asked: "You you want the 11 x 17 trimmed?"

Unthinkingly, I said, "Yes."

So I ended up with three 8-1/2 x 11 printed illustrations, and one 10-1/4 x 16-1/4 printed cover...

So, if I wrapped that shortened cover around 65 pages of heavy paper I'd get a hell of a wide trim on the right side of the book, thereby cutting deeply into the three already-printed and centered illustrations.

I smote my head. I danced with disgust. The printing bill had been horrendous as it was. Having it done over was out of the question.

Fortunately, I have a ream-capacity paper cutter. I trimmed enough off the bottom and left sides of the illustrations to save the right side fairly well and preserve the integrity of the illustrations.

And [thanks to the marvelous positioning controls on the Gestetner] I was able to print the text pages very low and with the minimum space on the left (to allow for that big right-side trim.

Then...I discovered that in spite of all this, the trim would be too wide on the right if I insisted

on wraparound. So, reluctantly, I decided to cut the cover in two and have separated front and back covers.

My apologies to the purchasers of CANNED MEAT and to Bruce.

NOW I discover the printer didn't manage to give me even 450 copies of all of the illustrations. So I'll end up with about fifty copies of the edition without illos and the covers. [But the title page with a smaller version of the front cover will do as a cover, and I can offer those copies at a reduced price... $3., say.

Now my worry is that the longest legged Swingline staple (1/2") won't be long enough to properly bind the book. I suppose I should gather a complete copy, set up the stapler in the heavy-duty lever-assist I have, and see what happens.

[Pause.]

Okaaay... I've assembled and trimmed the first copy. The staples are long enough and everything looks okay. I'll have to adjust the in-from-the-edge depth of the stapling, but that's it. I breathe a sigh of relief. It looks pretty good.

But for STAR WHORES I'll have a printer do the whole edition by offset.

CANNED MEAT, by the way, has the strong interest of a professional editor in NY. We shall see.

In any case, I'll not run another edition of CM from the stencils, so this 450 copy edition is it for me and may become a collector's item of sorts. I'm told that my 1960's porno books are now being collected and are very hard to find.

## # LETTER FROM IAN WATSON

October, 1978

'I've been buried deep in a new novel which is now, at last, nearly done and tied up; and I feel morally obligated to finish by November ("I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep", as Robert Frost put it) for, would you believe, I got awarded a Literature Bursary worth £1250 by the Southern Arts Association of GB -- a regional branch of the Arts Council -- to write it. This must be the first time part of the Arts Council has sponsored the writing of science fiction. Things look up!

'You may recall that our co-publishers in Paris, Editions Champ Libre -- who did your DEFENSE DE COUCHER (RAW MEAT, isn't this, first version?) -- brought out an unpublished (in English) Essex House-type erotic SF satire by me, called THE WOMAN FACTORY and evocatively relabelled ORGASMACHINE in French. A young French director called Gerard Sanas has just taken out a year's option on this to do a technical screenplay adaptation in the hope he can find a producer to buy the film rights from me; so maybe (with a lot of "ifs" along the way) there may be a movie -- the anti-Emmanuelle -- to take Cannes by storm in 1980, 81.... It's a nice thought to think; and why not indeed? Let it be.

'I'm happy that you and Alter altercated yourselves into favourable feelings about my JONAH KIT with only a few major grunches. Pessimist... well, I'm not actually. Things almost work out right in my books; the possibility of success is there, the option of it. And people can grasp it. It's just that, looking at the history of the world, and this century, and the sort of behaviour we're capable of ... You might say that I'm working towards the positive, by a negative route; because there is fool's gold, we know that real gold exists, as the Sufis say. Anyway, I'm happy to report that in my most recent book, MIRACLE VISITORS, which Ace are doing in December, one guy does make it through. The giant squids of the deeps... yes, they may be intelligences; but one can't put everything in a book, can one? Not completely everything. The first essay I ever wrote at College got the comment: It's a bit like a Christmas pudding -- there's something of everything in it. Some people have said my books are a bit like that.'

*((Sometimes it's extremely difficult not to put in too much; there's a feeling of obligation to explain everything and answer all possible reader questions. Part of the art of fiction writing is knowing or intuiting which questions to answer and which to let hang.*
*((A U.S./Canada film company once took an option on my BONGO BUM, but nothing ever came of it. And I had tantalyzing partial reports from friends of having seen a newspaper clip about a movie made from one of my books, and of seeing a credit line 'From _____ by Richard E. Geis' in a movie...but I never heard about it legally or financially. So there you go. I'm perfectly willing to believe one of my publishers sold film rights to one of my books and didn't let me know of it. (There have been a few books sold on all-rights contracts...never again!)))*

## # CARD FROM ROBERT A. BLOCH

November, 1978

'Beyond Genocide -- the C.J. Cherryh interview -- and conclusion of ONE IMMORTAL MAN -- complemented by the columns and reviews -- all add up to a superlative issue which again demonstrates the infallible good taste of the Hugo voters. And your own.

'Yes, I know the Pope I referred to is dead, and has been replaced by one who looks just a little bit like R.A. Lafferty, which is okay by me. But if this Pope dies and we get one who looks like Harlan...

'Oh, well, no sense borrowing trouble.'

*((How about a ROBERT BLOCH FOR POPE campaign? ))*

## # LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS

Sept. 1978

'I'm sure you'll get lots of responses to Ronald Lambert's comment in SFR #27 that evolution violates the second law of thermodynamics (entropy) and I'll leave it to the experts to answer him definatively, but by chance I was reading a book a few days ago which also touched on this point -- Colin Wilson's BEYOND THE OUTSIDER (1965), the final volume of his "Outsider" cycle on existential philosophy. In a footnote on page 129 of the Pan Books paperback edition (British) Wilson quotes from a letter to him from the biologist Sir Julian Huxley, who says that the anti-entropic nature of evolution "does not contradict the second law of thermodynamics, since it depends on energy received from the sun. It merely means that on this planet the second law of thermodynamics is now not working..." In any case, I hope the Creationist debate continues awhile since I don't think the issues are going to be settled for a long time to come.

'I was skeptical when I read, at the end of Rene Anderson's letter, that "there is no 'Hounds' archtype (sic), as such," because

I've always thought of archetypal country as largely unexplored and unknown -- but open to any imaginative interpretation we will upon it, unicorns, hounds, robots, whatever. My dictionary, in fact, defines archetype as the original pattern or prototype from which all things of the same species are copies, so it stands to reason that there's an ideal Hound in there somewhere if we'd only check. Well, I did check, falling asleep soon after reading Anderson's letter and in the early hours of the next morning my diver returned with this message:

> 'I swam the Unconscious Collective, but I never did see no Hound.
> Now I ask on the shores of Objective -- Could it be that the poor doggy's drowned?'

*((I'm not a scientist and reading science texts puts me to sleep. Essentially what I've been doing in this Creationist-Evolutionist firefight is hold coats and get out of the way. My current belief is that mankind is an evolved creature. We are too thoroughly linked to this planet in a myriad of biological ways to be an "insert" from another planet. And I find it very difficult to believe that a Creator concerned with the entire universe took the time and trouble inherent in the Bible creation version in re us and Earth; it smacks too much of ethnocentrism, race egotism....))*

# The yearly second class ownership and circulation statement required by the Postal Service is at the right. The paid circulation grew a few hundred copies. Cool. I do not want a runaway success with a huge circulation. I've got all I can handle now. I make enough to live on and see a few movies and eat out once in a while.

The no advertising (except for my own publications, of course) holds firm.

# There is no "Alter-Ego Viewpoint" reviews this issue, I'm afraid. All Alter's reading time is spend reading for the GALAXY column. Mine, too. I will continue to do the "Small Press Notes" column. It's very popular and valuable.

## # LETTER FROM SANDRA MEISEL

November, 1978

'Given the prevalence of history as a hobby among fans, I'm surprised that no one raised objections to Ben Bova's statements in #27 about "Western Civilization suffering a fifteen-hundred year hiatus between Aristotle and the Renaissance". I know my comments are late but my honor as a trained medievalist compels me to say something. First of all, the interval between Aristotle and Galileo is about 2000 years, not 1500 but it's the historical thinking I'm questioning, not the arithmetic. By hiatus in civilization I assume Bova means a gap in science and technology rather than in the totality of civilized living -- unless he regards science and technology as that totality. But surely he would not wish to slight the developments in the humanities continuing during Hellenistic, Roman and medieval times, so I will confine myself to the history of science and technology.

'Did technical knowledge switch off like a light with the death of Aristotle? Hardly. There were people like Archimedes, Euclid, Apollonius, Eratosthenes, Hiero and the rest of the Alexandrians in Hellenistic times. Roman engineers were better than Greek but medieval ones were far more efficient and innovative than their ancient predecessors. As the eminent historian of technology Lynn White wrote in last month's SMITHSONIAN, "While nothing of ancient Greek or Roman engineering perished along the road, the attitudes, motivations, and most of the basic skills of modern technology before the electronics revolution originated not in Mediterran-

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ean antiquity but during the 'barbarian' Middle Ages".

'Medieval Christians, not ancient pagans, held that the material universe was good and worth studying, that physical labor was honorable (classical Greek thinkers never soiled their hands but Roger Bacon insisted that scientists must be able to make and use their own apparatus), and that technical innovations should be rewarded in money and status (for example, in England Edward I's chief engineer had an annual income four times that of a knight). The Middle Ages made revolutionary technical advances in agricultural technology which were the foundation of all their other achievements. For the first time in history, society ran on the power of animals, water, wind and tides -- not human slaves. I could give many more specifics on how medieval Europeans expanded and improved ancient learning and prepared for the rise of modern science but perhaps readers would enjoy digging it out for themselves from Lynn White's MEDIEVAL TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE and Jean Gimpel's MEDIEVAL MACHINE: THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

'Now about Bova's allegation that the Catholic Church 'shut down the School of Athens in the second or third century AD" and so brought on the Dark Ages. I realize the Church is a favorite all-purpose whipping girl in your pages but this particular charge won't stick. The School of Athens was closed in 529 by order of the Emperor Justinian. Far from being a puppet of the Church, Justinian was a determined Caesaro-Papist who made and unmade Popes (and doctrine) at will. His goal was to deny teaching positions to pagans not to supress higher education which continued at Constantinople and elsewhere. The seven banned professors emigrated to Persia, found they liked State Zoroastrianism even less than State Christianity and came back home. Was the rise of modern science delayed by this episode? Not in the slightest. These professors were extreme Neo-Platonists, not Aristotelians. This means they were mystics who despised the material world -- hardly a position favorable to scientific discovery. The Byzantines kept the works of Aristotle intact and transmitted them to the Arabs and Europeans who applied them much more usefully.

'And by the way, it appears that a man named John Philoponus anticipated Galileo's experiments during the reign of Justinian but nothing came of this any more than came of having Aristotle's texts. The pragmatic, technically innovative medieval experience was a necessary prelude to the rise of science.

'On #28: Glad of the chance to learn more about C.J. Cherryh. I must confess to a similar admiration for Vergil. While a senior in high school I wrote a pageant version of the first half of the AENID that was performed by a cast of 200. I played Dido with rather too much enthusiasm -- came the death scene, I stabbed myself right through the costume leaving a bloody scratch on my bosom. (Don't bother asking to see the scar.)'

*((Your observation that the Church seems to be a 'favorite all-purpose whipping girl' in these pages caused my eyebrows to waggle. I deny the assertion. And shouldn't that be 'whipping-person'?))*

11-16-78 Yes, I saw that reference in the Buck Henry opening monolog on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, Nov.11, to STAR WHORES.

I'm sure they didn't "steal" it from me. That play on words is a natural and likely to occurr to many superior minds.

As to my prospective novel titled STAR WHORES: I'm going to replot it to include another element I have been toying with in the back of my mind---what if the whores are human minds in robot/plastic female bodies with exaggerated sexual forms? And what if these human minds/brains are placed in these artificial bodies to serve as sex playthings for sex-needing men on mining jobs on far planets? And what if these jobs are by contract...or prison sentences? (Not sure yet.) And what if the human brains/minds placed in these sex-purpose female bodies are not all female? What if one of them was a male in a female body? Would he make a better whore or a worse one than a female mind? How would the customers react to the articial females? To the idea of a human brain/personality embedded in the body? To one of them being male? How would the body function?

All very interesting questions I'll have fun answering.

## # LETTER FROM JOHN BOGGS

November, 1978

'I just finished ONE IMMORTAL MAN and I consider it to be one of the better stories I've read this year. Why couldn't you find anyone to publish it? Too much sex? Violence? No matter, the way you put it out with illustrations is much better. I have to say though, that the end of the story was a shocker. Who would have expected that? Are you going to continue the story or let it be?

'By the way, I also just received CANNED MEAT. I enjoyed this one just as much. I hope you plan to write more. You have a unique style that I like, lots of sex and lots of violence, plus a plot. You don't see that too often, or at least I don't.

'I was wondering, have you thought of printing other people's stories in SFR? Or do you just want to print your own?'

*((I probably made a mistake in not sending ONE IMMORTAL MAN to more than two publishers. At the moment Larry Shaw, my agent now, has it at an editor. I think it's a highly commercial novel, but it is an adult sf novel, and adult in a different-than-usual manner. And controversial.*

*((Thanks for the kind words.*

*((No, I have no plans at all, never, no, ever, of publishing other peoples' sf in SFR.*

*((I might publish STAR WHORES in SFR for one reason only---to force myself to write it by the device of obligation. As things stand I don't see any time free in which to write it in the foreseeable future. If I publish the first section in SFR, however, I will have to finish it to meet the serialized deadlines of SFR. So don't be surprised if STAR WHORES does appear here in 1979 sometime. But that will be a last resort. (I might add that part of the reason I serialized ONE IMMORTAL MAN in SFR was to force myself to finish it.*

*((Thus I stagger through life.))*

## # LETTER FROM DAVE TRUESDALE

October, 1978

'To all those faneds who have been so kindly sending me their fanzines over the past year (when TANGENT was not publishing) I thank you most kindly. I would now ask your help in a project in which everyone involved will benefit. I need each and every con report I can get my hands on (preferably from the most well known or largest cons such as Westercon, Midwestcon, Boskone, Worldcon, etc. etc. of 1978).

'I also need to take a look at your fanzine for possible inclusion in THE SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK, edited by David Gerrold, compiled by yours truly, and published by Kerry O'Quinn. Tentative publica-

tion date is June, 1979, so there's not much time. Please send me -- if you haven't already -- your publications for 1978, as well as any and all con reports you have published, IMMEDIATELY. I plan to use this information in a section on Fandom and a section on Fanzines (Number, type, outstanding contributions in each category, etc.), so please do not delay. With your help THE SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK will finally represent fandom and its works as no other publication has.

'And remember, the YEARBOOK will be heavily visually oriented with many color photos and illustrations, so please send good copies of your publishing endeavors, for the year 1978 only. Again, I thank you and ask that you send all material to:

THE SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK
7627 Bannister Road,
Kansas City, MO 64134

Phone: (816) 761-0576

## # LETTER FROM STEPHEN GREGG

ETERNITY SF
EDITORS: HENRY L VOGEL &
STEPHEN GREGG

PO Box 510, Clemson, SC 29631

October 14, 1978

'Dick,

'Just a short note to let you know that ETERNITY is being revived. Have found a partner, name above, which solves the money and time problems I encountered with ETERNITY in its first incarnation. And hopefully this version will be considered fully professional in both appearance and content. It will have full-color covers, typeset interiors (our IBM Composer arrived yesterday), a quarterly publishing schedule, etc.

'Rates for fiction will start at 1¢/word for first NA rights, on acceptance. We trust this will go up after the first year or so. We are also looking for science articles and sf/fantasy oriented cartoons and puzzles.'

## # LETTER FROM JOHN BROSNAN

14 August, 1978

'I know your letter writers rarely plug their own books in their letters but I'm afraid that's what I'm doing here...I'm writing to announce a forthcoming publishing event that almost nobody in the SF world has been waiting for -- the appearance of my book FUTURE TENSE, which is a survey of science fiction films.

'Just what the market needs, I hear you say, another survey of science fiction films. Ah, but this one is different -- this is a bitchy survey. The first bitchy survey of SF films, in fact (it would have been a lot more bitchy if the publisher hadn't cut a hell of a lot out on the grounds that I'd gone over-length by about 40,000 words). Apart from me the book also features interviews with directors Richard Fleischer and Val Guest, special effects man, Derek Meddings (THUNDERBIRDS, THE SPY WHO LOVED ME) and such writers as Michael Moorcock (who puts the boot into the film version of THE FINAL PROGRAMME) Harry Harrison (who puts the boot into CLOSE ENCOUNTERS), John Baxter (who puts the boot into me) and John Brunner (who doesn't put the boot into anyone, unfortunately, though he does have a few unkind words to say about ZARDOZ). Foreowrd is by Harry Harrison and it should be appearing, courtesy of St. Martin's Press, some time in the New Year...

'Which leads me onto your comments on CLOSE ENCOUNTERS... I agree completely. The film is a mess -- a lot of pretty pictures obscuring the fact that its various parts don't add up to a cohesive whole. Its main flaw is that it really consists of two different movies badly joined together. One movie is about "UFOs", bizarre phenomena whose actions have no rhyme or reason in the material world; and the other movie is about these nice beings from outer space who come down to tell us everything is going to be all right. The mischievous, even sadistic behavior, of the UFOs in the first half of the picture bears no relation to those cute, friendly aliens who emerge from their flying Christmas tree at the end.

'As usual, Hollywood is light years behind current trends of thought: I don't think even the most devout UFOologist still believes that the explanation behind the phenomena is connected with anything as banal as visitors from outer space. Even Ray Palmer had come to the conclusion that flying saucers had more to do with inner space than outer, as he revealed in his THE STYMIE FACTOR. That was quite a remarkable piece...I read it in an almost constant state of amazement. At times I, disturbingly, found myself nodding in agreement with him and at other times I had to stop and go and have a drink of water...One thing became obvious by the end -- if anyone had a real need to believe in UFOs, it was Ray Palmer.

'Incidentally, Ian Watson's new novel, MIRACLE VISITORS, explores the idea of UFOs-as-metaphysical-manifestations...it's a mind-boggler of a book and makes a great antidote to the simple mindedness of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS.'

## # CARD FROM MIKE GLICKSOHN

1978

'Just a postcard to thank you for the steady stream of superior magazines you are kind enough to keep sending my way with only an occasional slim Xenium by way of response. I did want you to know that I read through every issue and while I may skim over some of the reviews and interviews I always read your own comments and most of the letters.

'#26 is another fine issue, the second installment of OIM being a highlight of the issue. And if your usual massive influence on the Hugo awards can be used to gain a statue for Alexis Gilliland -- whose work actually illuminates your magazine -- I know a lot of people who'd cheer rather loudly.

'One other thing: How did James McQuade, a fan I have never to my knowledge met, draw such an accurate picture of me on page 9? Can I sue for defamation of character or something? Once again, many thanks for SFR; it's one hell of a fine magazine.

'Very best wishes.'

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 16

# AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN BRUNNER

THE SQUARE HOUSE: SEEING THE WORLD

## *Conducted By Ian Covell*

John Kilian Houston Brunner was born in Oxfordshire, England, on the 24th of September, 1934. He was educated at Cheltenham College, where he specialized in modern languages (in the summer before his seventeenth birthday he took scholarship level papers in GCE in English, French and German).

His interest in the SF field had begun at the age of six, with the discovery of a copy of Wells' THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, though it was not until he was 13 that he collected his first rejection slip. A couple of months after his seventeenth birthday, he sold his first SF novel, of which he says, "Mercifully it appeared under a pseudonym and sank without a trace". He left school shortly afterwards after informing the headmaster that school was beginning to interfere with his education.

Between leaving school and being drafted into the Royal Air Force he made his first sales to American magazines, starting with "Thou Good and Faithful" (under the pen-name "John Loxmith") in the March 1953 ASTOUNDING.

Following his National Service he made a few more sales, and on the strength of them--as he puts it, "under the mistaken impression that I was already a writer"--he moved from his Berkshire home to London.

"I was living in a two-guinea-a-week room on an income which averaged £4 a week", he recalls. "I learned an awful lot of ways of cooking potatoes". In the nick of time a job opening appeared and he went to work at the Industrial Diamond Information Bureau under science fiction writer "John Christopher".

Both in that post and for two years subsequent when he was an editor with the Books for Pleasure group--working under John F. Burke, likewise the author of much noteworthy SF--he continued to write in the evenings and at weekends and on making his first novel sale to the U.S. in November, 1958 (which appeared as THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY from Ace in 1959) decided he could again risk trying his luck as a freelance.

Meantime he and his wife Marjorie, ("My keenest and most astute critic") whom he married in the summer of 1958, had become closely involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, for which he wrote the song that has been described as "the national anthem of the British peace movement", THE H-BOMBS' THUNDER.

In addition to his many books he has contributed short stories and novelettes to all the leading SF magazines in Britain and America. Translations of his work have appeared in nine languages--though that admittedly includes a solitary article in Chinese. Two of his stories have appeared as TV adaptations, and he has also scripted a Murray Leinster novel ("The Wailing Asteroid") for filming (as THE TERRORNAUTS).

His novels have won various awards. STAND ON ZANZIBAR won the 1968 Hugo Award and the PRIX APOLLO as well as the British Science Fiction Award. THE JAGGED ORBIT won the British Science Fiction Award the following year. THE SHEEP LOOK UP won the Italian prize, the COMETA D'ARGENTO. THE SQUARES OF THE CITY was shortlisted for the Hugo.

●

SFR: Why has the majority of your fictional output been in the SF genre?

BRUNNER: I suppose I write science fiction for two major reasons. First, I got printed with it very early in life. When I was about six or seven I really got hung up on science fiction and it was my favorite entertainment reading until I suppose the end of my teens, at least. This may have something to do with the fact that I was growing up during the war when our future seemed in some measure to depend on technological ingenuity: whether we could outdo the German airforce, for example.

SFR: How do you view the changes in SF of the last few decades?

BRUNNER: The emphasis has clearly shifted from the 'hard' sciences which used to fuel it during the 30s and 40s to a greater concentration on the sciences which touch on us as human beings--the so-called 'soft' sciences (biology, medicine, ecology, ethology, ethnology and so forth). I'm strongly in favor of this because the raw material of all fiction is ultimately people and in the so-called "Golden Age" when one looks back on it one feels that while the ideas were brilliant, the characterizations were often cardboard.

SFR: Do you have favorite authors or 'schools' of authors in SF? Outside it? Which elements attract you? You introduced "The Best of Philip K. Dick"--comment?

BRUNNER: Do I have favorite authors? No, not really. Except insofar as because I'm chiefly a storyteller (my strength is in narrative rather than in elegance of style or whatever) I tend to go back and reread people who are especially strong in this area. My idol, and that of many other people in science

fiction by the way, is Rudyard Kipling whom I regard as the most completely equipped writer ever to tackle the short story in the English language.

I'm also enormously impressed by anybody who can take me by surprise with a book or story. Somebody who can open my eyes to a wholly different section of the world. For example, while admiring the skills of Jorge Luis Borges as a miniaturist, what I find lingers most in my mind after rereading his work (as I did just a couple of weeks ago. I reread everything I have by Borges--about 6 or 7 books altogether, I think) is the sense of having been transported to a different culture. This in some way parallels the kick I get from Kipling, who transports me to the vanished world of British India, which was very real of course to him in his day. And this likewise parallels the appeal of science fiction. I believe I once expressed this (in fact it was at the world convention in London in 1965) as conceiving greatness in literature, in art, in terms of being made "more wise". The little shiver that goes down the back when you recognize you are in the presence of true greatness is perhaps a miniaturized parallel to enlightenment, satori or whatever. Not unnaturally, I suppose, I go looking for whatever in the light of past experience will give me this.

Philip Dick I admire tremendously. Chiefly because of his ability to create, with hallucinatory vividness, worlds from the inside of his own skull. His gift for making the absurd seem convincing while you're reading it is, I think, without parallel anywhere in the science fiction field and possibly outside it.

Otherwise I can't really say that I go for particular authors or 'schools' of authors. I rather have dislikes than likes in this area: I dislike preciosity, I dislike overwriting, I dislike people who try to veil shallowness of thought with extravagant lushness of language. I also have more time for people like, say, Milton--who was so brilliant a poet that he could write, in a poem, a line consisting of one syllable and still have a classical example to quote to justify himself. In fact he wrote freer verse I think than anybody else achieved until about the...oh, about 1910, I suppose. I much prefer people like Milton to people like Pope, Dryden, anybody living in a strict or rigid age, witty though such people may be--in the eighteenth century sense of wit.

SFR: I recall hearing your NOVACON speech in 1976 which 'proved' that the three basic plots were the only ones possible. Can you explain that again?

BRUNNER: If you want my full thinking on the subject of plotting fiction then you should go to THE CRAFT OF SCIENCE FICTION AND SCIENCE FANTASY edited by Reginald Bretnor and published by Harper and Row.

End of commercial break. But I can summarize it by saying that, for me, fiction does not become story unless the characters acting it out are changed convincingly by what they experience. There are precisely three ways in which a person can change/be changed: by emotional involvement with someone else, by discovering something within him/herself that he/she was previously unaware of, by force of uncontrollable circumstances. These are nicknamed "Boy Meets Girl", "The Little Tailor" and "Man Learns Better".

SFR: Your own plots tend to be mysteries or thrillers in which the last chapter or so reveals the rationale, an explique to the reader. Was this a conscious choice or something you tended to find 'necessary' when the book was nearly over?

BRUNNER: I don't consciously choose to make my plots mysteries or thrillers but I think I've already laid stress on the fact that basically I am a narrator, a storyteller, and this is the easiest, most convenient and often the most satisfying way of keeping up the tension of the story for the reader.

It's extremely rare for me to start a book without knowing what the ending is. I may not know what is going to happen between the start and the finish--in fact, very often I don't, and that's the best part of it--but definitely I know what direction I'm going to head in. If I don't then the argument will wander, become diffuse, the characters will drift, and there won't be a story.

SFR: Do your plots tend to build from central themes with characters added, or vice versa?

BRUNNER: I've a well-trained subconscious now. Ideas pop up from it occasionally which I simply scribble down on a sheet of paper and shove in a file to get rid of them, but those which turn into stories or novels or, come to that, poems, arrive in the form of a developed piece of reasoning, thinking. Not just the general idea but an idea fleshed out. So I can't say that my plots built either from themes with characters or vice versa. I don't settle down to work on anything unless already I have the intimation of action which will develop from the idea and that means the characters have already started to enact it.

SFR: Having reread those of your books I possess, I think I can detect that from an initial basis of "People will set things right by doing something about them", it progressed to "No one will do anything and if this goes on...". True?

BRUNNER: I have become considerably more cynical about our chances of survival as a species since I was in my twenties. This is I think largely due to the fact that I've seen so many people in the seats of power fail to learn from experience and make the same old mistakes again. Not only on the international scene but on the domestic scene. The attitude of so many of our political leaders seems to be, "It didn't work last time, but it should have done. So we'll do it again until it does work..." I'm afraid this is no recipe for the survival of our culture and civilization. It may not wind up with the extermination of our species but I am definitely gloomy about this version of human civilization's prospects of getting out to the stars. I think it's going to take us another thousand or ten thousand years. Either that, or we shall carry an extremely bad conscience with us--leaving behind starving billions, whose ghosts I trust will haunt the spacefarers forever.

SFR: Another theme appears to be "manipulation" and/or "possession". (The two players of THE WANTON OF ARGUS, 1953, the weapon-combines of THE JAGGED ORBIT, 1969, the vicarious emotion-vampires of PRODUCTIONS OF TIME, 1967 and in the ultimate, the direct chess game of THE SQUARES OF THE CITY (1960).) This seems to hint that you view mankind as controlled--possibly as a rationale

for his inaction, that it is not real humanity to blame, but a somehow "higher" intelligence. Comment?

BRUNNER: I do not view mankind as "controlled". "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, it is in ourselves!" Are you sure this comment is levelled at me? It sounds more like something you could say to Eric Frank Russell after reading SINISTER BARRIER--that's going back a bit. No, very definitely I do not view mankind as "controlled". The fault is entirely with ourselves and we have only ourselves to trust to get us out of the mess we ourselves have dumped us in.

SFR: Oftentimes in the early books, one man was the catalyst for action, a torch-bearer of sanity. In TO CONQUER CHAOS the central point was that someone--the mechanical brain--was aware of a problem but uncommunicative; when it did communicate, the problem was "solved". AWARENESS seems to be the rallying cry.

BRUNNER: I can't really comment, because the central point of TO CONQUER CHAOS is rather that human beings and not their machines have to cope with problems. I don't think of the book in this sense at all. I don't look at it from the sort of angle you seem to be indicating.

Inasmuch as I can make sense of the statement about AWARENESS...(and I'm not sure that I do make sense of it) well, I have a strong suspicion (as I feel most people do) that you get on better in the world if you pay attention to what's happening around you rather than shutting your eyes and rolling up in a ball in the corner.

SFR: Like the difference between "hearing" and "listening", many people (in my opinion) are not aware in an active sense...

BRUNNER: Oh, that's a fair comment, certainly. I think you may be driving at the sort of definition we owe to (if I remember rightly) Edmund Crispin, when he said that the chief attribute of a science fiction hero is that he's the guy who knows what is going on. And I have no quarrel with that. Indeed, I wish it could apply to me in real life.

SFR: In BEDLAM PLANET, 1968, one line was "sanity consists in doing what the planet you live on will accept", and in the same book those who will not adjust to this "sanity" are murdered...

BRUNNER: You seem to have misread my argument. You're not alone in this; I've had two or three other people make the same error. The rest of the colony is not "murdered". The other people are "poisoned", you might say "forcibly adapted" to Asgard, and what is of Earth in them is killed--but not themselves. Just as the six original experimental volunteers make the adjustment by ingesting the hallucinogen precursor which is a feature of the Asgard vegetation so, after drinking water in which bruised stems have been steeped, and being deprived of the food of Earthly origin on which they've been dependent the rest of the colony goes Asgard-sane. I should have thought that followed fairly clearly, but if I get the chance to revise this on a subsequent printing of the book I think I should because clearly a lot of people have just read straight past that point.

That statement ("sanity consists"...) was due to John Campbell. I got it from one of his editorials. In fact, I had some faint hopes that he might serialize the book, but he didn't.

SFR: And "Polymath" finally points out that nostalgia is a destructive influence, one can only live with what one has. Is mankind, in your opinion, so very blind on this subject?

BRUNNER: I don't quite see what subject you mean.

SFR: The need to live with one's available resources.

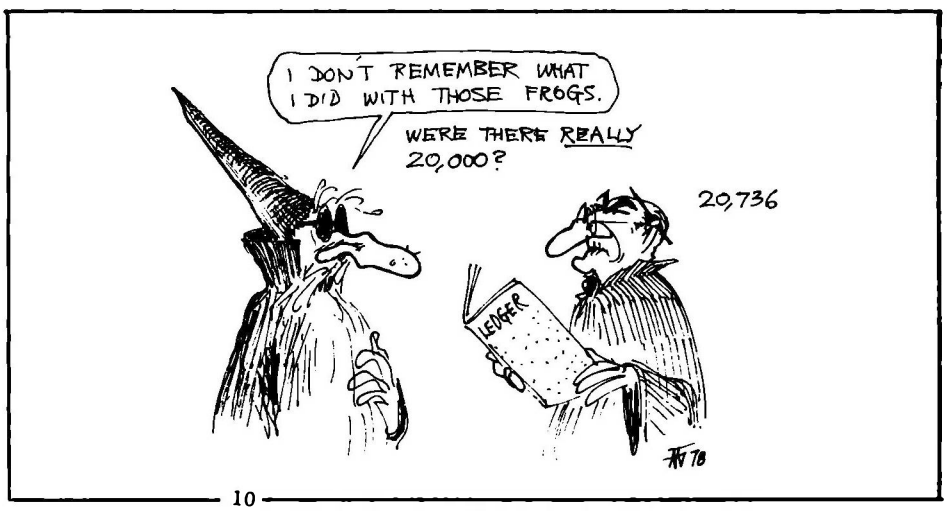
BRUNNER: Yes, I take the point. I don't think one can give an answer yet. The very idea of being limited in respect of our natural resources is amazingly recent, you know. The Christian tradition which shaped the thinking of the rich western world was based on the notion that Adam was given dominion over the beasts of the field and the fishes of the sea and the rest of material creation, and whether we used our treasure wisely or unwisely was a matter between the sinner and God, not a question for debate in the village pub after working hours. Not until about Malthus's day were mathematical and predictive techniques powerful enough to allow us to reason about this sort of problem. Those cultures, however, which are sometimes nowadays offered as examples of instinctive conservation like the Amerinds, all too often turn out on close examination to have been just as careless and greedy as we are--only not sufficiently numerous to cause permanent damage.

SFR: Your recent works seem to have concentrated on ecology, on the political and social effects and causes. Other authors have chosen a more direct man-nature scenario; why have you chosen this approach?

BRUNNER: Well, one of the definitions of man is "the political animal", and if one's going to talk about the interaction between humanity and the biological environment then it seems necessary in my view also to consider interaction between groups. Politics, in other words. If other writers choose a different approach then that's probably a function of temperament.

SFR: Aside from the faddish ecological notice of the last few years, has mankind's attitude altered in any major way?

BRUNNER: This is open to debate. We may see slight improvements in the worst areas (although the recent conference on pollution in the Mediterranean, alas, closed down without any major decisions having been taken) but the worst sort of damage is being done elsewhere. Places like Korea, Latin America. Underdeveloped countries are just as bad as we are in the rich world at ruining the environment and they



have far less incentive to develop a conscience.

SFR: Much of your work has concerned racialism. You range from the near-contemporary BLACK IS THE COLOR and the Max Curfew thrillers, to "allegories" such as INTO THE SLAVE NEBULA/SLAVERS OF SPACE (Androids are human too!) and BORN UNDER MARS (Martians are second-class citizens to the mutated Earth-derivative cultures; this book also has the message of a supposedly inferior being proved more useful and influential than the "superior" races), culminating in the horrendous idea of THE LONG RESULT where racialism has extended itself to mean "Mankind is the best race"...

BRUNNER: THE LONG RESULT can not be said to "culminate" anything. I first drafted that book when I was 21 and the published version differs essentially only in that I rewrote it in first person rather than third. So it goes right back to the beginning of my career; it's not a culmination in any sense...

SFR: I meant it rather in the sense of an ultimate idea of racialism, not an endpoint in your own work.

BRUNNER: Okay! As to BORN UNDER MARS, well, there's no message in that, just one way of writing a story: To take somebody who turns up trumps at the end. This is known as "The Little Tailor". In fact that's a classic instance of it from my work, I suppose.

There are points in this questionnaire which indicate to me that you've looked for something different in my work from what I intended to put into it. This question on racialism for instance. Now, me, I have the firm conviction that what has made Britain "Great" since about the year 1066 or thereabouts, and possibly quite a long time before, is the fact that over and over we have digested waves of immigrant groups and we have somehow managed to go on being a functioning national unit. We've absorbed everybody from expatriate Jews through black body-servants brought back by smart planters from the West Indies, to Huguenot weavers who fled from French repression of Protestants. You name the population movement, we seem to have got some of it. And we've wound up being British. If we're going to be a major power in the 21st century, it seems to me necessary that we should take advantage of what little good we did (not very much of it, but some slight good we did) going out and conquering the British Empire, and rescue from the wreckage of the Commonwealth the first genuinely multi-racial society on Earth. We have a tradition which puts us in a position to do this, and I see it being spoiled before it is properly under way. And I'm very much annoyed.

It used to give me great delight to walk along Oxford Street and within the space of, let's say Selfridges to Swears & Wells, hear a dozen languages being talked by the people who brushed past me, and know all the speakers were British. I used to like that. It was almost the only excuse I could give myself for going up to the center of town when we lived in Hampstead. Otherwise I detest big cities. But I see that kind of fun fading under the impact of meanness, short-sightedness, time-serving local interest--all the vices for which office-seekers have been notorious since the beginning of recorded time.

One of the few things that I miss, living in our little village in Somerset (I should say "large village" now, I suppose) is our black friends. I miss them. Very much. Well, it is such fun to talk to people whose assumptions since childhood are so radically different from one's own. It's almost like having science fiction happen to you in the real world.

SFR: Speaking of racialism: Within days of the murder of Martin Luther King, you founded a "Martin Luther King Memorial Prize". Can you give its aims and your involvement?

BRUNNER: I spent the earlier part of this afternoon, 20th January, 1978, packing up this year's submissions for the Martin Luther King Prize to send off to my fellow adjudicators. Its aim is to award a prize annually for literary work first published, or performed if it's a script, in the United Kingdom during the calendar year preceding the date of the Award, which reflects the ideals to which Doctor King devoted his life. The last award was made to Evan Jones for the scripts of the BBC series, THE FIGHT AGAINST SLAVERY. I was very pleased about that. My involvement is that ...well, I run the thing.

SFR: You are--were?--also involved very deeply in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and "Countdown", the Family Planning International Campaign...

BRUNNER: I went all the way through CND--of which I am still a member, by the way, although less active since we moved away from London--from local group level up to the National Executive Commitee on which I served a year's term. For Family Planning International, again before we left London, I used to do things like revising publicity material--polishing it, giving it more of a point.

SFR: Do you use your fiction as direct warnings against these types of problems, as adjunct to your non-fictional output?

BRUNNER: No, I do not. One of the worst dangers that can befall a writer is to become didactic or preachy, and I hope to goodness I have avoided that. The only safe way to tackle a subject about which you're seriously concerned is to create believable characters in the story who can credibly be concerned for their own sakes. It's fatal for characters in a book or story to be mere mouthpieces for the views of the author. This is in my view what so often spoils books that might have been fascinating but which were written by "amateur authors": Skinner's WALDEN TWO is a particularly bad case in point and Robert Rimmer's THE HARRAD EXPERIMENT is another "awful warning".

SFR: As a member of these organizations, you would have had access to statistics and other information about proliferation and real facts about the problems; did this sort of bombardment gradually make you cynical, resigned, hopeless about mankind?

BRUNNER: My experience working with CND in particular and to a lesser extent the Countdown Campaign and other good causes like The National Council for Civil Liberties, of which I'm a member: Yes, indeed, this has made me much more cynical but see what I said earlier about the inability of politicians to learn from experience. It looks as though people who are that greedy for power just leave their common sense behind on the way to high office. Or if they're born to high office they never have a chance to acquire any common sense. I am not, though, hopeless about Mankind. I decline to believe that this species I was born into is due to be hung out to dry on a dead branch of the evolutionary tree. Mark you, I do get more worried with the passage of the years.

SFR: Your work tends to concentrate on mass social relationships: Politics. The extreme personal subject of sex seems to be missing from your work...

BRUNNER: Do my works lack sex? I have never thought so, certainly my private life never has...I'm glad to say. To be quite candid, I've

had three goes at answering this section and I'm afraid I've been driven to the conclusion that you haven't been reading the books I've been writing. I can't see that this has any relevance to my writing.

There's nothing sexless about Nickly Haflinger nor about Kate Lilleberg in THE SHOCKWAVE RIDER. There's nothing sexless about Hans Dykstro in WEB OF EVERYWHERE; he's had affairs with men as well as women. There is a very considerable amount of sex--some of it explicit and overt--in THE SHEEP LOOK UP. In STAND ON ZANZIBAR there's an extremely wide range of sexual activity up to and including an orgy! Are there not people enjoying sexual connections of assorted kinds, not to mention fetishisms, in THE JAGGED ORBIT? In THE STONE THAT NEVER CAME DOWN I recall a reviewer in, I think it must have been one of Ted White's magazines, commenting approvingly on the fact that I'd put a "gay" person into a science fiction novel without this causing any kind of special fuss...Is not Mustapha Sharif in WEB OF EVERYWHERE? (I'm concentrating on the recent works, of course) an extremely sexual person? No, I'm always very concerned in my books to present human beings as sexual creatures.

SFR: Why "of course"?

BRUNNER: You mean "recent works of course?" Oh, because they're fresher in my mind as well as closer to my real-world thinking... and because when I was writing the earlier works people weren't asking me this kind of question, so I never bothered to try and work out answers.

SFR: I meant perhaps: Few of your books seem to examine in detail a relationship or relationships, more often they are about mass relationships or the collision of cultures?

BRUNNER: This is probably true of SF in general, isn't it? When I feel inclined to deal with a particular relationship between specific people, I turn away from SF (or nearly so--I'm thinking of QUICKSAND) and write a contemporary novel like THE CRUTCH OF MEMORY or THE DEVIL'S WORK. Then it lays an enormous egg, fails to earn out its advance and disappoints both me and its publishers, so I go back to where I know I can rely on paperback reprints and translations and so forth. For me, writing straight fiction has always been a luxury--a hobby, almost, to be fitted in when the bank account is flush enough to finance the three or six months I need to devote to the project.

SFR: Another seeming lack is religion. I do not advocate its use particularly but I know of only a few of your works that explore it in any degree.

BRUNNER: I'm afraid I react in exactly the same way. There is a great deal about religion in my books. I have people practicing religions of an extremely wide range. For WEB OF EVERYWHERE I even invented a brand-new religion. In fact, I've done this more than once. Even in such a relatively trivial work as THE MAN FROM THE BIG DARK (which you'll find in INTERSTELLAR EMPIRE) have you completely overlooked the man who adheres to a religion which requires the burial of a body intact for it to be resurrected and who in consequence is busy killing all the glob-fish he can reach? I have, in STAND ON ZANZIBAR, not only existing varieties of Christianity, but another one...no, two others, come to think of it, The Divine Daughters as well as the Right Catholics; I've got a new Muslim heresy, The Children of X. Religion turns up in just about every one of my novels that I can call to mind offhand. It may not be a major feature of the argument...but, in MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN, people's response is to turn to religion when monsters start appearing in the sky. In THE DREAMING EARTH, again there's an invented religion, the Holmesites. In AGE OF MIRACLES (formerly DAY OF THE STAR CITIES) the solution to the problem is to found a religion again. I cannot make much sense of your statement. At least I must say I don't advocate its use either, particularly. It's a habit-forming drug rather worse than morphine.

It is true that if you come to my books looking either for frank scenes in the confessional or masturbation fantasies, you'll go away disappointed. I confined my "hard-porn" to "hard-porn" publishers and they didn't pay me well enough. (One of these days I would dearly like to script a "blue movie" with a million-dollar budget.)

SFR: Interpolated theology and sexuality, I tend to miss things like that. You have examined many differing political and social systems, but I don't believe I ever saw you examine the collision of religion with society or the relationship between differing religions?...

BRUNNER: This is probably because religion qua religion plays no part in my life. But as to the collision of religion with society, try the godhead sequences in THE STONE THAT NEVER CAME DOWN.

SFR: Religion does have the sidelight of myth which is sometimes present in your work. Planned?

BRUNNER: Oh, this is deliberate of course, particularly in the case of the Begi tales in STAND ON ZANZIBAR. One of my great hobbies is folk-lore. I'm by no means an expert on it but I am fascinated by the way in which something as trivial as a dirty joke can survive for centuries and perhaps millennia.

SFR: THE SQUARES OF THE CITY was an odd book to write. Why did you write a "fantastic" work based on a chess game? It seems to have been completed in 1960 but not published until 1965; can you explain the delay? A note at the end says the final moves were not made (not that I wish they were)--a hint, perhaps, of a "need for reconciliation"?

BRUNNER: I do not see that it was an odd book to write. I wrote it for a very good reason. I wanted to set myself the toughest challenge I possibly could. At the time I was turning out a lot of quick, simple, underpaid work for Ace--I had to produce a lot of it to keep my head above water and not go back to an office job. Over a period of about 18 months I put together the most difficult book I could conceive of to write: Matching a novel move for move with an International Grand Master Class chess game without the game showing through, without making the action of the book creak. I finished it in May 1960. The reason for the delay is simply that it was bounced by just about every publisher you can think of. When eventually Ballantine did take it on, I was about prepared to give up hope, but I'd gone on sending it out because I was damn bloody sure it was the best book I had written up to that point. And it was. I told you it was shortlisted for the Hugo. I'm sorry it didn't come out the year I finished it or the year after because it would have advanced my career by several rungs of the ladder.

And it's still in print. I forget how often it's been back...I think there have been six or seven editions by now.

The final moves of the game were not incorporated for the good and sufficient reason that if they had been my protagonist would have been dead. This has nothing to do with whatever you mean by "the need for reconciliation". Does it?

SFR: I meant that the book could have been third instead of first-person which would not have changed the book much save to lead into the idea of an outside observer--the chessplayer--and could have hence killed off the protagonist as the real game had it...

BRUNNER: No, no, no--absolutely not! The book couldn't have been written third-person! (In fact it was from writing THE SQUARES OF THE CITY that I learned what was wrong with THE LONG RESULT.) On the one hand the omniscient author would have been able to tell the reader much more than the circumscribed awareness of Boyd Hakluyt could perceive, he being a single-minded and somewhat blinkered person; on the other, my intention would have been undermined if the game had gone to its original conclusion and the reader would have been left with the impression that I wanted him/her to believe we are pawns and pieces. I wanted the contrary!* I

*The chess-game in SQUARES was perfectly legal--of course--in its original version. I interchanged a couple of pawn moves, making them irregular, to emphasize that people aren't pawns.

wanted a situation where only the most devious expedients (like the agreed irregular pawn-move which takes place while Hakluyt is out of town, and someone throws paint over the statue of the national hero and machine-guns are set up in the square outside the luxury hotel) could maintain the illusion that people are manipulable. I'm glad to say that right until now everybody I've talked to about the book has seen this point without being prompted.

SFR: STAND ON ZANZIBAR: Why did you write the book? Why did you write it in such a style? How long did it take you to write and how much research did you do? What were the basic assumptions of the scenario?

BRUNNER: I wrote it because I wanted to write it. There's no point in asking for any other reason. I adopted the style because I'd been struggling for over two years to find a way in which to present my central argument: What happens in a world so grossly overpopulated that people have reluctantly accepted eugenic legislation, if someone comes along with a means of optimising the embryo? During my attendance at the Milford Science Fiction Writer's Conference (September,1966,

I think it must have been) in Milford, Pennsylvania, it dawned on me that I didn't have to devise a way of presenting it. It had been done for me. I could simply rob John Dos Passos wholesale. So I did. And it worked. I recall when I had the typescript lying on the piano just prior to sending it off, Tom Disch came to call. I asked him to leaf through a few pages and he did, and he looked up and said, "Marvellous, why hasn't anyone adapted Dos Passos to science fiction before?", which pleased me enormously.

I spent about five months on the writing. My research was all done I think before I started writing. I accumulated a pile of clippings (about four, four and a half inches high by the time I'd finished) in a polythene bag and I never touched it during the writing of the book.

SFR: Can you explain the popularity of the book?

BRUNNER: This is due to the fact that it is the best bloody book I have ever written. Apart from which it obviously touched a raw nerve in the popular consciousness.

SFR: The human relationships tend to the destructive or nightmarish: Rape, terror, incest, anger, murder, suicide, insanity...

BRUNNER: The relationships necessarily were alarming. Given that overpopulation, so far as we can judge from species that we've studied in this fashion, tends to create a situation of stress, agitation and eventually violence. The classic studies have been done on rats. We are not rats. Nonetheless, it seems to be an inescapable concomitant of urban life that the incidence of violent crime goes up rapidly and the incidence of mental breakdown increases. Remember that everybody who has ever been prescribed a tranquilizer has been treated for a mental illness and you'll begin to see the scale of the problem.

SFR: These destructive relationships seem to be increasing nowadays. If you still believe in the coming existence of this world, how long do you give us?

BRUNNER: Yes, I do feel that all these crises in personal relations are exacerbated by increasing population pressure. We have palliatives but we have no cure at the moment. Jonas Salk seems to believe that we can go into what he calls an "Epoch B"--that is to say, achieve a stable optimum plateau of population. I am doubtful. I think we are more likely a "population crash" species. How long do I give us? Well, I'm no better equipped to guess that than anybody. It depends what does it for us. If it's a nuclear war, I'd say one thing. If it's a great plague, I'd say another. So far as our species goes I think we're probably pretty tough and pretty durable but so far as our civilization goes I think we're very fragile and increasingly fragile the more we become urbanized, and the more the pressure of living cheek-by-jowl with our stranger neighbors is going to wear away our tolerance and explode in riots, violence, individual crime.

SFR: Later you wrote THE SHEEP LOOK UP which is a virtual rewrite--less complex--of STAND ON ZANZIBAR. Why did you write it? Wasn't ZANZIBAR enough?

BRUNNER: Rewrite? Ouch! I strongly recommend that you go back and take another look at that one.

SFR: I meant to ask why you wrote a novel with such a similar theme, a similar type of novel, to ZANZIBAR. In fact, quite a few of your later books have at least some similarity to it.

BRUNNER: I suspect you're being misled by a gradually developing technique which I found applicable to more than one version of our possible future--there being degrees of probability which shift from year to year as we find out more about our predicament. Just to demonstrate one fundamental distinction from my point of view between SOZ and TSLU: The former takes place in "dislocated time"--i.e. if you try to map on a calendar what happens

to Norman and what happens to Donald and to various subsidiary characters, it can't be made to fit. There are three narrative time-scales running in story-harness which aren't chronologically reconcilable. By contrast, TSLU is narrationally strict; what is presented in the context of this month falls within this month, story-time, and as nearly as convenient succeeds what appeared on the preceding pages.

SFR: Your work shows increasing hopelessness. Several of your later works have "downer" endings inserted. Do these hint that the earlier upbeat novels were disguised tragedies, possibly dictated by market considerations?

BRUNNER: Hold it! I don't go around inserting endings. If there were upbeat endings in my earlier work then that almost certainly reflects the fact that the world was offering me more optimistic raw material to work with when I was in my twenties and early thirties. It's been a very long while indeed since I have had to tailor my books to market considerations. I did, some five or six years ago, find that I was writing so many novels with downbeat endings that I must force myself to write one with an upbeat ending for fear of losing the ability. Hence THE STONE THAT NEVER CAME DOWN. That wasn't imposed on me by outside considerations. I mean it wasn't an order from an editor or publisher which made me do it. It was just a decision that I took from looking over what I'd published most recently. On the other hand, THE SHOCKWAVE RIDER reflects something which I hold very deep convictions about. We landed ourselves in this mess! It's nobody else's fault! We could, if we put our minds to it, get ourselves out of it again. What's lacking is a decision.

SFR: Although ENIGMA FROM TANTALUS was noticeable for its ending in 1965, in 1971 came THE WRONG END OF TIME in which a main protagonist kills himself because he cannot take the chance he may one day be unable to avert a catastrophe he has foreseen, in 1974 WEB OF EVERYWHERE had a protagonist who killed himself because he was basically destructive and could not change. TOTAL ECLIPSE had an unexpected twist destroying burgeoning hope. There is no compromise, no ambivalence in these endings, the message seems to be that there is no help, no relief--Is this correct? Have you changed of late?....

BRUNNER: I think you're looking for a message again. I cannot stress too strongly that looking in a novel for a message is nine times out of ten (and I would hope ninety-nine times out of a hundred in my output) pointless.

This question of message is not one which you can honestly, seriously put to a novelist like myself... A message belongs in a sermon or a piece of advertising copy. It does not belong in a work of fiction and I sedulously avoid this so far as possible. Clearly if you look at a wide cross-section of my work you will see that, for instance, I have very great difficulty in portraying an out-and-out villain. I find it almost impossible to believe in people who are fundamentally evil, even though I know, in the cerebral sense of knowing, that such people have been recorded in the course of history. I find it almost literally impossible to write a villain without giving some grounds for his villainy. In the classic phrase of Mort Sahl, "Okay, we come from a

broken home! Now will you give us the money?"

SFR: Of recent years, you have revised a few (about nine) of your earlier novels. How did you choose which to revise and wh you did so, which elements did yo ter, a change in emphasis ps? Why did you revise them?

BRUNNER: I chose the books to revise on the basis of the fact that they had a stronger plot or argument than I was equipped in my early days to do justice to. The erations were largely a shift phasis, but not invariably. imes I simply expanded. Fo istance, the book which appeared as EARTH IS BUT A STAR and as THE HUNDREDTH MILLENIUM grew up to be very much longer in the CATCH A FALLING STAR version, because I was able to luxuriate more in the sheer variety of my imaginary future world. That revision almost wrote itself, retaining the original plot-line but adding color, detail, density.

The chief shortcomings of my early work which I tried to rectify when I put a book through the typewriter a second time after a lapse of several years are, basically, dialogue, characterization, description and hitches in the narrative flow, in that order. A perfect example is given by TIMES WITHOUT NUMBER. When I rewrote it I managed to get around something that I simply copped out of on the first draft: How about time travel, the Pope, and the lifetime of Jesus? I think I covered my bets there very neatly. But in the first draft I'd simply chickened out of facing the question.

SFR: That's several times you've used the word "argument" about your books. How do you mean the word?

BRUNNER: There are two senses, unfortunately: One is quasi-legal (the lawyer presents his argument, that's a well-argued case; he is arguably the laziest man in Somerset, this is inarguably a stupid point of view) while the other is more a logician's word, so to say: The argument of an operatic libretto, or as in my own case, of a story. I often use the latter term, rather than saying plot, because the plot of a story concerns the interactions of the characters, whereas the argument concerns the principles underlying the eventual resolution. In one of Aesop's or La Fontaine's FABLES this could be summarized into the moral; in most modern works of fiction, because we live in a world which we regard as more precarious and more equivocal, such a conclusion would be oversimplified and perhaps arbitrary.

SFR: You have used several pseudonyms; any particular reason? The late John T. Phillifent used to publish his "best" books under his own name and the others as by "John Rackham"...

BRUNNER: The only reason I've used pseudonyms is so as not to appear to be in competition with myself. That is to say, apart from my very very early days. The reason I published my fi story in ASTOUNDING under the name John Loxmith was because everybody--my schoolteachers, my parents, everybody in a position to tell me what to do--was saying that I must give up all thought of earning my ing as a writer. So just in ca hey were right and I was wrong, I put a pen-name on that particular story. I gathered courage and strength after that, and my other pseudonyms, Keith Woodcott and Trevor Staines, were wished on me by Ted Carnell when he was editing SCIENCE FANTASY to hide the fact that he was running two or three stories by me in the same issue. Later on, when I was publishing so many novels with Ace that I was in competition

with myself, I put the Woodcott name on a few of them. I think Mr. Woodcott wrote half a dozen books. But there's no particular difference in quality between the Brunner books of that period and the Woodcott.

SFR: Several years ago you founded BRUNNER FACT AND FICTION. Why did you do this?

BRUNNER: We founded this in 1966, basically because if anything happens to me the company doesn't die with me. From 1964 onwards I've been traveling fairly regularly to the States. I try to get over there once a year. I'd been doing increasingly more traveling without my wife and it occurred to us to worry about what would happen if I were killed in an aircrash, particularly. I'm insured, but if something were to happen to me and she were left to sort out the mess, an author's estate is notoriously difficult to probate because they impose arbitrary values on unsold copyrights, that sort of thing. With the company then Marjorie could go on cashing my royalty checks without having to wait for legal argy-bargy. In some respects it's useful from the tax point of view, and in some respects it's a drawback. Corporation Tax is higher than Personal Income Tax; on the other hand by splitting my income two ways we escape the highest brackets of Income Tax. Essentially the company exists to administer my copyrights and to survive after my death, in case something ghastly happens to me before I'm willing and ready to go.

SFR: What work are you doing now--are you staying with SF, restricting your output...?

BRUNNER: I think you already know about my major historical novel, which I'm working on, STEAMBOATS ON THE RIVER. I'm not going to talk about it, because a talking writer is seldom a writing writer.

Whether I'll come back to science fiction after this, I don't know. I think it's very likely. I find science fiction so much easier to write than anything else I've ever tried.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Brunner.

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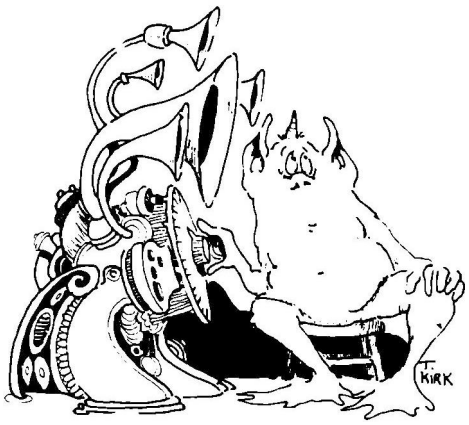
# NOISE LEVEL

## a column

# john brunner




### A GRAB-BAG OF WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL INSIGHT INFORMATION

Over the past several years I have grown into a habit which I never used to find necessary, but which now is essential -- partly, no doubt, because of advancing age, but in large measure I'm convinced because of the damage my year's course of Aldomet did to my short-term memory. I write down ideas on scraps of paper and stick them in a file-cover, sometimes as often as three or four times a day.

I don't mean to imply that in the old days ("Ah, I had genius then!" -- Ben Johnson, in NO BED FOR BACON) I didn't write down ideas, or at least the ones I thought were going to prove useful. I certainly did. But in far more formal fashion, on 6 x 4 index cards which I then carefully stored at the back of my sales-record drawer. The front bit is classified SOLD; the back bit -- no, not UNSOLD, but PENDING. It sounds more optimistic.

But if I'd entered every last one of these ideas on a card, I'd have a stack of file-drawers by now. So I just make sure I put my scribbles where I can locate them again. Reading them again, of course, is a different matter...

Yesterday, after hunting high and low for the file (it turned out I'd cleverly catalogued it under U for UNEXPLOITED), I finally found the time to check through this mass of random notes.

Much to my relief, a remarkably high proportion of them made sense, and some were genuine rediscoveries. For instance, I found the transcript of a dream I had on the way back from a French SF convention, which obviously must have made a tremendous impression on my mind, for I noted it down in detail. Yet, when I came across that piece of paper, I literally could not remember having had such a dream, and still can't. The image, though, is a peculiarly powerful one; I think it may grow up to be a poem.

Here, then -- and probably in future Noise Level columns -- are some scraps culled from several years of trying to catch transient insights and convert them into words.

* * *

First off, a point which I suppose must have struck me when I was adding to the new ideas file at a particularly rapid rate.

We are not evolved for an age when an "anybody" like me can have insights or thoughts or inspirations which in e.g. classical times would have been enough to sustain a high priest for a lifetime!

(I see on the same page I also noted down: cf. Paul -- "Behold I reveal unto you a mystery." Yes, he was one very high priest, that guy...)

But I have insights of that order twice a day!

At least, according to the note I do. And there's a degree of truth in it. For instance, over the years I've been desultorily devising an imaginary religion, meant for a novel which I may well never write. I am one hundred per cent certain that it is now self-consistent enough for use -- in the real world? Why not? Ron Hubbard did it!

On a slightly more serious level: It is true that, thanks to media which make things old if they date back five, even three years, more people are being exposed to the notion that being a maker or creator is a job like other jobs. Whichever way you turn, you find people who have been destroyed by this assumption, whether by being burned up (Jimi Hendrix or Mama Cass or Sandy Denny or...) or by excessively early success which wiped out the impulse (I didn't hear anything from Adam Diment lately), or simply by being reduced to the necessity of being inventive in order to survive, which above all can cancel out the pure joy of creation.

Perhaps this view of the creat-

ive person leads to a greater acceptance of the artist in society; he/she is no longer grovelling for patronage but can stand up and speak as a citizen. I don't know whether this situation is wholly new -- in ancient Rome when Nero proudly claimed to be the greatest artist of them all, one suspects the artist's status was much enhanced (though the question arises: Was Nero any sort of artist when he wasn't being emperor, or was it something he took up as a hobby after inheriting the throne?).

On the other hand, according to PUNCH a hundred years ago, it was smart for a young man about town (a "swell") to be mistaken for a painter, if not for a poet. Even in a period which we tend to think of as exceptionally square, this trace of respect (awe?) survived...

But what I started out to consider when I wrote myself that note must, I imagine, have been a somewhat different aspect of the subject.

J.H. Fremlin, who performed calculations to show that the limit of human expansion (the point at which the earth re-radiates as much energy as falls on it from the sun) will be reached when our entire planet, land and water, is covered by apartment blocks 2000 miles high, also said that life might not be so unbearable "because at any given time there will be four million Shakespeares and sixteen million Beatles alive..."

But this isn't and can't be true. What makes an artist -- in the broadest sense -- stand out is rarity. In a tribe of thirty to fifty adults, the odds are definitely against your community including someone with creative genius. In a city of a million, precisely the reverse is true, and there may well be several such people.

Is their impact comparable with the appearance in your thirty-to-fifty-strong tribe of a child prodigy? No way, man. No way!

I stand by my undated insight: We are not evolved for an age where so much information abounds that ideas which would have been impossible even a generation ago are springing up in the minds of otherwise perfectly ordinary people.

And since frustration stems from thwarted creativity, I think we may be due for a sort of civil war.

Perhaps (he added, thinking of the New York subway and its decorated trains) this war has already broken out.

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ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 7

# There has been a constant plea from various and sundry to please include the addresses of letter writers whose letters are published in SFR. In fact, addresses are wanted for almost everyone whose writing appears in SFR.

I'm willing to do that. But I'm aware, too, that some writers do not want their addresses generally known, because they don't want to bother with a lot of extra mail... having to respond to fan mail and/or unwanted queries about their work and etc.

So, beginning with the March-April issue, I'll print the addresses of contributors unless they say me nay.

READ THIS!!

AFTER THIS ISSUE, THE ADDRESSES OF CONTRIBUTORS WILL APPEAR IN THE MAGAZINE. IF YOU ARE A WRITER, REVIEWER, ARTIST, INTERVIEWER, LET ME KNOW IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR ADDRESS PRINTED. AND PLEASE LET ME KNOW VERY SOON!

Thank you.

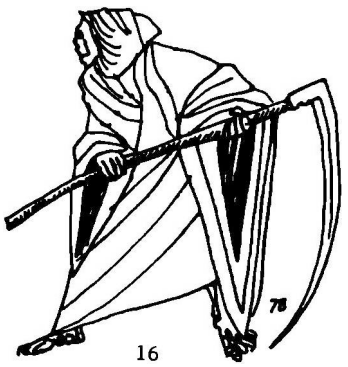
# DID YOU KNOW that a male spider's penis is at the end of one of its legs?

Now, will somebody please write a s-f story incorporating that data? There's this sentient alien arachnid, see, and he is stuck on Earth for fifty years...

# In answer to a query: no, I have no plans for any kind of yearly index for SFR. Nor will I resume "The Archives" in SFR. I recommend a subscription to LOCUS for those who need an accurate record of all sf and fantasy published.

LOCUS PUBLICATIONS, POB 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119. $9. for 12 issues in USA. Write for other rates.

I see the role of SFR as one of reviewing and interviewing and news and opinion. From now on there will be no fiction i SFR...(Unless I change my mind sometime. That isn't likely.)



# LETTER FROM DR. DEAN R. LAMBE

October, 1978

'The following might be of some interest for Elliott's "The Human Hotline":

> '"Dean R. Lambe has made his first fiction sale to Ben Bova at OMNI. The short story was purchased for four figures. Along with everyone else with any sense, Lambe renegotiated the OMNI contract -- a document with which Faust would have been familiar."

'H'mmm, well so much for the sage old advice on how to break into the penny-a-word, we'll-pay-you-some-year markets. Of course, I might have started there, if the editors(?) of those failing zines ever answered their mail or returned manuscripts in less than six months. Hated to see Scithers get the Hugo this year, obviously few of the Hugo voters submit manuscripts; there's just nobody like Bova.

'Congrats on your own well-earned Hugo, by the bye. Hope things have changed enough at GALAXY for it to survive your book reviews (can't say that I'm sad to see Walker's reviews go). '

*((Congratulations to you on your sale. The classic marketting advice has always been to try the best-paying markets first.*

*((I'm not sure how to take that crack about my book reviews. Come to think, I'll take it badly. *Snurffle....sniff....*))*

# LETTER FROM ROBERT ANTON WILSON

November, 1978

'The letter from Dr. Bartucci in your November-December issue is certainly a masterful piece of invective, but somehow it fails to convince me. It seems, at least from over here, that Dr. Bartucci got so carried away with denouncing Arne C. Eastman's "blissful, deadly ignorance", "Cocksure arrogance", etc. that he missed the whole point of why Eastman and millions of others are so hostile to orthodox medicine in this country today. Although I expect that this will just lead to Dr. Bartucci insulting me as roundly as he has already done to Eastman, I would like to state the case as I see it.

'The reasons for trying to learn as much about medicine as possible, and act as your own physician where possible, are based partly on

anger and partly on sheer desperation. But they are also based on cold calculation of the risks of the situation.

'1. American medicine is cruelly, excessively, unusually exploitative. A major illness is inevitably a major financial disaster, to the average American family. This is especially true of those who are self-employed and not covered by group insurance, but it is also true, to an alarming degree, even of those who are covered by such insurance. Blue Cross, Blue Shield etc. are notorious for leaving you owing thousands of dollars when you thought you were "fully covered". Now, every institution in capitalist society is "exploitative" in the general sense that they're all out to gouge as much as they can; but none are quite as vampiric as the medical profession. Every poll shows that doctors are disliked and resented more than any other professional group, for precisely this reason; there is something infuriating about a group of people getting rich and fat out of the pain and suffering and agony of their fellow citizens. Nobody hates the other gougers such as plumbers, or TV repairmen, or even bankers or lawyers, quite as much as doctors are hated -- because no other group gouges so much, and gouges it out of us when we are in pain and frightened.

'2. American medicine is cold, inhuman, dehumanizing and generally treats the patient like a part on a Ford assembly-line. An American hospital is virtually indistinguishable from an American slaughterhouse in the way it treats the poor animals that get processed through it. Everybody knows this, and hates it, except the doctors. The doctors are getting rich off it, so why should they notice that the victims are not machine-parts or sheep but suffering fellow-humans? Films like THE HOSPITAL with George Scott or TELL ME WHERE IT HURTS with Peter Sellers, and books like IT'S CHEAPER TO DIE are expressions of the growing public horror and outrage at the whole inhuman system. Mr. Eastman's letter was another expression of that horror and outrage. Dr. Bartucci seems to think Eastman speaks only for himself; he does not. He speaks for millions who are "mad as hell and not going to put up with this any more".

'3. American medicine is narrow, dogmatic and increasingly resembles the medieval priestcraft, as Dr. Thomas Szasz has pointed out in numerous books. Evaluate the evidence about alternative systems any way you wish, but the fact remains that everybody knows somebody cured (or seemingly cured) by unorthodox methods like acupuncture, yoga, herbal teas, faith-healing, etc. etc. etc.; and everybody knows people who have died horribly in the merciless "care" of the money-hungry orthodox medicos. It seems to me that whether we decide to try alternatives or to resort to the A.M.A., we are taking a gamble; and the best we can do, under the circumstances, is to be aware that we are gambling either way and to try to judge each problem independently. Blind faith in either the establishment or in some pop-cult alternative is not the answer. Ultimately, we have to think, and decide, for ourselves, and take the responsibility. That is what Mr. Eastman is trying to do, and I wish him well in the effort, and hope devoutly that Dr. Bartucci's dire predictions about untimely death, etc. will not be fulfilled.

'My own policy is to avoid the orthodox medicos as much as possible -- first, because I simply do not want those greedy bastards getting any richer off me than they already have; second, because they are so bloody pompous and intolerant that I am sure they must be wrong at least half the time; third, because I believe that the more responsibility I take for myself, the more I grow as a full human being, in the sense of the Human Potential movement. But I am not so angry and outraged as to be blind; I will resort to the bastards when I have to. (However, if I ever develop a really major illness, I will migrate to England, where there is a decent socialized medicine system, so that my prolonged hospitalization and/or death will not be accompanied by a crushing financial disaster for my wife and children.)

'Of course, this policy is a risky one. But I am walking today because I was treated, for polio, by the Sister Kenny method, at a time (the 1930s) when the orthodox medicos were denouncing that method as witchcraft and charlatanry. Those who blindly trusted orthodox medicine, in that case, are mostly still crippled today, if alive at all. There are risks both ways, as I said. I think the biggest risk of all is to trust a profession so lacking in ethics, in open-mindedness and in simple human decency as the established medical profession in America today.'

*((Yes, rip-off artists they often are...as when they get a major stroke patient and the admitting doctor can tell immediately the patient has no chance. But the patient goes into Intensive Care and is given all kinds of expensive, useless tests and treatments to enrich the hospital and the doctors "needed" for opinions. Thus in a hectic hour $500 to $1,000. can be gleaned.*

*((Of course the anxious, grief-stricken relatives in waiting are unable to deny the patient these tests and services. "If there's a chance, doctor..."*

*((So it goes.*

*((At the same time it must be admitted that if that first doctor said to the relatives, "There's no hope. He/she'll be dead in an hour or so. There's nothing we can do." there's a chance he and the hospital might be sued for mal-practice...for not going through the motions. So the problem is partly with the patients and relatives, too. Big money costs and big money profits often bring out the worst in doctors, patients and lawyers. The medical structure of this country is not concerned primarily with curing and prevention and repairing. It is firstly a profit-making machine for its owners and its leeches.))*

## # LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT

October, 1978

'Thanks for the latest SFR. The Bova interview was good, although, yet again, I often had the impression that the interviewer was too dumb for the interviewee. There are so many Darrell Schweitzers in the world, under different names (in Britain, one such is Brian Stableford). They are unstoppably prolific, disseminating their shallow thinking and college-educated platitudes through every available semi-professional outlet, drowning us in superficiality and dumbness. I wish they would all go away and get jobs as computer programmers.'

*((Be it noted that Charles Platt is working on some sf interviews for publication in SFR. Then Schweitzer and Elton Elliott can take pot-shots at him!))*

## # LETTER FROM DOUG BARBOUR

8/31/78

'Well, yas, much as I find some of your attitudes a great tribulation, I was planning to renew; just sorta forgot. If only you wouldn't give so much space to Darrell Schweitzer, he said, but that's such

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 35

# AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL MOORCOCK

## By Ian Covell

SFR: Could you start by giving an autobiography?

MOORCOCK: I was born in Mitcham, Surrey (on the outskirts of London) December 18th, 1939. My earliest memories are of air fights and the like (we were between Biggin Hill and Croydon aerodromes) and my strongest nostalgic memories are of bomb-shelters, bomb-sites and shrapnel. I doubt if I ever felt more secure than during the war -- there were so many basic affirmations of security, like shelters. This is not cynicism. The first school I went to was rotten and I didn't go back because it was bombed. My father left my mother (he hadn't served in the war) around, I think, 1945. After VE Day, I think, but I'm not sure. My mother moved soon after, but not very far. A couple of years of my childhood were spent in a fairly primitive corrugated asbestos cottage with an Aga stove as its most modern convenience. It was in the grounds of an old mansion which had either fallen down or been bombed. A factory (where my mother worked) and a tyre dump also occupied part of the grounds. Opposite this collapsed estate -- half-country, half-industrial -- was Mitcham Common and golf course, which seemed endless to me. There were also a few copses, woods and so on nearby. I was sent to Michael Hall school in Kent. It was a Rudolf Steiner school, for boarders. I don't think I lasted more than about a year (ages 7-8, probably) before, having run away a few times and got into other kinds of trouble, they asked my mother to take me away.

The last time I left Michael Hall, there was some confusion over dates and I arrived at the station to find no one to meet me. My mother had moved in the meantime, so I didn't know where to go. I spent most of the night in the police station. I went next to a local (Norbury, London SW16) private school where all that I'd learned at Michael Hall (algebra, languages and so on) was dismissed. I wasn't very happy there and played truant a lot. Failed my 11-plus.

In desperation, my mother decided to give me a "business" education and equip me for a journalist's career (since I'd by now started to produce hand-done magazines like OUTLAW'S OWN, using carbons for copies) by sending me to Pitman's College. I learned typing but all the other subjects were a mystery to me. I left at 15 and became an office boy in a shipping company. By this time I had produced a fair number of fanzines and so on. One was an Edgar Rice Burroughs fanzine, but most of them were fairly general, like Book Collector's News -- a kind of polemical magazine for collectors of Old Boys Books and such things. My dog's name was Brandy and he trained himself to climb trees so that he could continue chasing cats after they thought they were safe. I was writing stuff from an early age (I could read adult books before I went to school and this also made school very boring for me) and after I was fired from the shipping company after a few months (for "insulting" the lady who turned out to be the manager's mistress, one very hot summer day -- there were eighteen employees in a room not much more than 14 by 25 -- it was an expanding company, though it never expanded its premises), I joined Harold Whitehead and Partners as an office junior.

This was a management consultants and everyone from the boss down was incredibly nice to me, encouraging me to do even more fanzines on the firm's duplicator and to write. My main job was going to the Times Library twice a week to get two books for the boss and one I thought he (and I) might like. The people there provided me with a more sophisticated education, more encouragement, more friendship than I'd ever had before. They encouraged me to take the job on TARZAN ADVENTURES when it was offered. At 16 I'd started selling articles and stories to the magazine.

By 17 I was full-time editor -- largely because nobody else would work for the low wages they were paying. I was unable to leave the magazine well alone and began to add text, stories -- increasing the fantasy and SF emphasis and decreasing the amount of comic strip. The circulation climbed, I'm glad to say, but eventually (believe it or not) the magazine was clobbered by distributors who had rival comics (Marvelman and so on) which were doing badly. The publishers wished to reduce the budget by returning to more comic strips. I refused to do this and shortly afterwards left.

I'd already spent some time in Paris. I spent some more time there, mainly busking. I also be-

gan to run an import business for Olympia Press books (primarily Henry Miller, who was then "banned" in England), and was caught by the Special Branch, eventually.

I got a job on Sexton Blake Library and began to work for Fleetway (then Amalgamated Press). Sexton Blake was at this time going through a lot of changes and (I'd got the job, I suppose, because I had defended the changes in one of my fanzines (for Sexton Blake enthusiasts, what else). I worked on Sexton Blake Library (two 45,000 word thrillers a month were published, I only ever wrote one and rewrote several others) as well as writing for comic books in the same department -- Thriller Picture Library and Cowboy Picture Library, mainly. I worked on the last Robin Hood annual, the last Billy the Kid annual and various other annuals of that sort. So far I'd been in the folk-hero business since I began in professional journalism -- Kit Carson, Buck Jones, Robin Hood, Buffalo Bill, Three Musketeers, Tarzan, etc.

Trouble came at Fleetway because of my "ideals". I refused to work on WW II material and I refused to work on a new project exploiting cold war paranoia. As well, I was heavily involved in the National Union of Journalists, even though they'd refused to make me a fully qualified member under 21. It meant that I couldn't sit on any committees or fulfill any official jobs (I did later serve on the NUJ committee) but my work with the Union got me into trouble with the management who thereafter devoted themselves to trying to squeeze me out (the Managing Editor thought I was a Communist. I was only "saved" because he thought Russia was going to win WW III and he didn't want to get on the wrong side of me...). A lot of hassles. In the meantime, I was gigging in small clubs -- doing mainly blues and r & b, as well as some political songs (what came to be called "protest") of a general libertarian nature (I wasn't, as it happened, a Communist -- I tended to think they were a bit old-fashioned and rather conservative).

Correspondence in those years was with Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and others (Guthrie was scarcely able to write, of course) and a number of people who were still suffering for their pleading of the Fifth Amendment, were losing their jobs and being sent to mental hospitals in some cases (this was twenty years ago in the USA). So I was a radical in politics and suppose that I still am. If anything, I have become more radical. I gave up what became the Rock business (this was the Tommy Steele and Skiffle era in pre-Beatles Britain) because of its commercialism.

I'd been writing non-generic fiction of one sort and another and by 1958 had completed an allegorical novel called THE GOLDEN BARGE (which Savoy Books of Manchester intend to publish next year). I'd written a few SF and fantasy stories because I had various contacts in that world -- the world of "fandom", which consisted of about fifty people, I suppose, in those days. But I had no particular ambitions in that direction, as I recall. I began writing long fantasy stories largely because Ted Carnell asked me for some and by that time I was a professional journalist willing to earn money in any way I could. Between 1960 and 1965 I earned most of my money from writing features and comic strips -- an innumerable number of stories for such markets as BIBLE STORY WEEKLY and DOGFIGHT DIXON, RFC. I began to specialize in "educational" features for such periodicals as LOOK AND LEARN, mainly because they were more interesting to research. I learned, if nothing else, an economy of technique and the ability to plan my stories in terms of scenes -- running landscape, narrative and dialogue together so that each contributes to the other. I wrote a comic strip, LIFE OF CHARLEMAGNE. A comic strip LIFE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT and another of Constantine. I wrote a lot of the KARL, THE VIKING strips which Don Laurence illustrated and I also wrote OLAC THE GLADIATOR. History and mythology was my speciality, as well as a certain amount of science. Gradually I gave up music pretty much altogether, apart from playing for myself. I wrote very much for generic "markets" during the period 1960-65 and although I learned a great deal I think it had a bad effect on me in some ways. You write too fast and let the genre dictate too much of the direction.

My first long SF story was the two-parter in SF ADVENTURES -- "The Sundered World/The Blood Red Game" -- and I discovered there that it was impossible to do much individual work in a hardened genre form. From then on, I became a proselytiser for what came to be called "new wave" SF and at that time hardly existed. In fanzines, at conventions, in guest editorials and book reviews, I attacked low standards and demanded more passion and care and integrity in the writing of SF.

I'd left Fleetway in 1960, as I recall, and after a time in Northern Europe in which I'd mainly performed in nightclubs for very little money or busked (for rather more), I hitchhiked to Paris where I was discovered literally starving and fainting and sent home by the British Consulate. I'd already pawned my guitar. My first experience of real mountains had come in Lapland, and I have never lost my love for them, though I'm more careful than I was in Lapland where I was climbing without any sort of equipment and hanging by my fingernails over glaciers while the mist came in all around me. Originally we had only climbed so high to get away from the mosquitoes in the lower slopes. It's incredible what someone will do to avoid insect bites. We were about the only biteable wild-life (my friend, David Harvey, and I -- he's now an economic geographer at Johns Hopkins) in hundreds of square miles, so we became very popular with the mosquitoes.

Returning to England, I met Hilary Bailey and in order to impress her mother that I was a solid sort and the right chap to marry her daughter, I gave up freelancing (I was also "blacklisted" by Fleetway because of my alleged political trouble-making, trying to get the union to protect the jobs of a good many married men and women whose incomes were affected by the take-over by IPC -- the union failed, of course -- there are many unions which do not succeed in holding anyone to ransom...) and got a job working for the Liberal Party Publications Department. At that time I thought there was some hope for the Liberal Party becoming a genuinely radical "third force". It was made up of a rabble of extreme rightists and -- well -- "Liberals" -- and I soon became disenchanted with it. Our policy documents often consisted of my going round to Transport House and the Conservative Central Office to get their policy documents, picking out the most "liberal" bits from both

and putting them together to make Liberal pronouncements. Jo Grimond was likeable but as thick as shit and Thorpe was merely foul. After a row concerning my suggestion that the Grimond book I was copy-editing should never be published and that it would set the cause back by years (it was naive and incoherent, to say the least) I once again found myself out of work. At Christmas.

A very bad winter followed -- the first winter of my marriage -- in which I wrote and rewrote stuff for Ted Carnell (he, by the way, gave me the "James Colvin" pseudonym -- he got the surname out of the Railway Guide) and others, having the worst success of my career, while the snow grew so heavy that the roof literally collapsed under its weight and Hilary discovered she was pregnant. Black days.

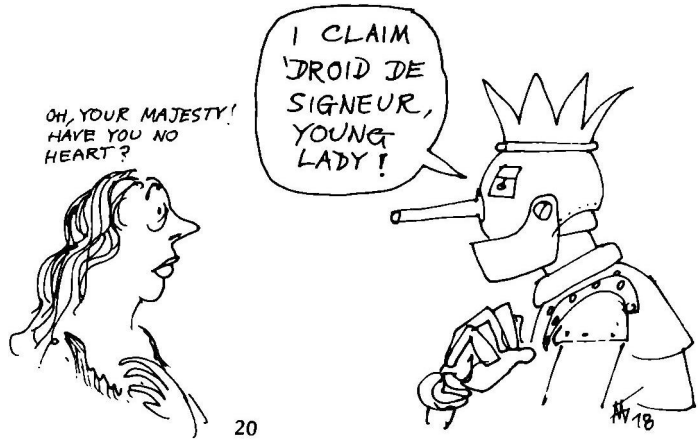
By early 1964 it seemed that NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY were to fold forever. They had become amongst my only markets (although by this time I had my first book, STEALER OF SOULS, 1963, out) -- at two guineas a thousand words! I was desolate. Then Ted Carnell told me the titles had been sold and he'd recommended me as his successor. Roberts and Vintner contacted me and said that they'd already promised Bonfiglioli one magazine -- which would I like. I chose NEW WORLDS because there was more scope in the title for expansion. It was the only period in which I was actually paid (very badly!) to edit NW. That period lasted for a couple of years, while it remained in paperback format. When R&V's distributors went bust, they had to dump NW. One of the R&V directors, impressed by Brain Aldiss's getting of an Arts Council Grant to "save" the magazine, decided to carry on as an independent publisher with me. We did, I think, four issues under his imprint. While I was away in America in 1967, he disappeared to Scotland and I haven't seen him since. I was left holding the baby. A firm called Stonehart, and well named, offered to take the magazine over. They did, but they were con-men and they also tried to "commercialise" NW in silly ways. I refused to compromise and we parted company. By 1968 I was sole publisher. I never incorporated (i.e. formed a limited company) so was responsible for all the magazine's considerable debts. I had begun writing sword and sorcery in 1966 or even earlier (the "Kane" series was done for R&V/Compact Books in 1965, as were, I think, the two "Nick Allard" books -- one of which became THE CHINESE AGENT -- these were originally meant to be rewrites, but it was easier to write an entirely new book than tackle the trash I was handed) and was forced to take on more s&s books in order to keep NW and myself funded, for there was no time for other kinds of work. This was how I came to plan and do the Hawkmoon books. Each one of these was written in three days. I had to do them in three days because the magazine was taking up so much of my time! My journalistic training enabled me to meet self-imposed deadlines, but at considerable personal cost -- to my family relationships and to my health. While NW stumbled along -- being banned, having printing difficulties, staff difficulties and so on -- I wrote very rapidly.

Stories written during this period included "The Final Programme" (written 1965), "Behold the Man" and "The Ice Schooner". These two latter were written because the first JC book had met with general incomprehension on the part of most readers and all publishers and I felt I ought to "go back" to more conventional writing, because my enthusiastic and rather joyful attempt at slightly "experimental" writing had failed to entertain anyone. I was despondent for a while. I like to write for readers and I felt I wasn't getting through to them, then there must be something wrong with me. It wasn't until 1968, I think, that I began the next JC book -- after the first had been taken by Avon in the USA (where it appeared, after all that, in a bowdlerised version) and the new firm of Allison and Busby, who published it in 1969.

I was still, by the way, involved in various forms of radical politics, though I never had any time for authoritarian parties like the Communist Party. It was the early days, I suppose, of the rise of the New Left or whatever it was called. Politically, you could call me an old-fashioned, non-violent follower of Plekhanov or Kropotkin. I hate Bolshevism and believe it destroyed the Russian Revolution. It is why Nestor Makhno of the Ukraine (an Anarchist) is such a continuing hero of mine. He was sold out by Trotsky and the Red Army after he'd served his turn and died of consumption in exile during the thirties. While he was in business he was hot stuff. It's probably why I identified with the "underground" papers when they began to appear in the mid-sixties, about the same time as NW. I never liked OZ, but I did work for IT and FRENDZ and had a strong loyalty to FRENDZ (for all its naivetes) while it lasted. We (Harrison, Gly Jones and I) did a special supplement to FRENDZ and wrote for it fairly regularly. Its schedules were about as erratic as NW's during the bad period of 1967/8. I refused to compromise when W.H. Smiths (a powerful force in the magazine and book world since they control the wholesalers as well as most of the retail outlets) and John Menzies (who have the rest of the distribution sewn up) tried to get me to take BUG JACK BARRON by Spinrad out and described the magazine as filthy, blasphemous and various other things. We became the subject of a newspaper debate -- with the liberal press on our side and the rightist press (who'd never seen a copy, of course) attacking us for our disgusting goings-on. I don't think any of us took it very seriously. We never considered ourselves "martyrs". We always tried to think of ourselves as a commercial magazine trying to reach an ordinary readership. Any other way lies madness and paranoia. Not that we didn't have our share -- only it turned out most of the time we only thought we were paranoid -- people actually were getting at us...

SFR: You mentioned a novel, THE GOLDEN BARGE; was this connected to the short story of the same title, and, if so, was the novel something like Edmund Cooper's FIREBIRD -- an allegorical tale of a man's life from birth to death as he pursues the mythical Phoenix?

MOORCOCK: Yes, the bit printed is



a fragment -- a chapter -- from the original novel. The Cooper story is probably quite similar, yes. It's a pretty conventional theme, I think.

SFR: You also mentioned the genesis of "The Chinese Agent". What were those two "Nick Allard" books -- and was that the protagonist or the pseudonym?

MOORCOCK: THE LSD DOSSIER, by someone who's name I forget, was a heavy rewrite by me. It was the first "Nick Allard" book and not really humorous. SOMEWHERE IN THE NIGHT was the second -- I threw away the book I had to rewrite and wrote a completely new one. PRINTER'S DEVIL was the other. I never republished it. The two later books were done under my "Bill Barclay" pseudonym. The first was by the name of the original author -- Roger something, I think.

SFR: New Worlds seemed to publish works and authors spearheading the change toward the "New Wave" --what did you feel were the failings of "traditional" SF?

MOORCOCK: We published for the first time a good many stories and novels no other publisher would touch. Also I worked hard to convince publishers to take on other books regarded as "doubtful" -- which I admired. I've been instrumental in getting a good few novels published which never appeared in NW and weren't always "imaginative". I'm proud of the fact, for instance, that I helped get THE HAND-REARED BOY by Aldiss published, that I published Aldiss's Charteris series (rewritten and expanded as BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD) and that before then I had published the whole of REPORT ON PROBABILITY A in NW. I wouldn't just stop at publishing the stuff in NW -- I'd then go on to try to get a publisher to take it. This happened with BUG JACK BARRON which couldn't find a publisher in the U.S. or U.K. until we'd done it. It happened with CAMP CONCENTRATION. It happened with, for instance, THE BOAT OF FATE by Keith Roberts, which we hadn't published as was not, of course, suitable for NW. We were the first people to push the newer American writers like Zelazny, Delany and (though he wasn't exactly new) Ellison here. We helped get Philip K. Dick decently published here. We also supported various non-SF writers such as William Burroughs, Alan Burns, Boris Vian, Borges and a good many other foreign writers who were not at that time either well-known or understood in this country. What, a little later, Judy Merril and Harlan Ellison began to do in the States was not quite the same thing. We ignored the hard-core SF world altogether (unless it was to subject it to various polemical attacks!) and didn't think it was worth worrying about. Our readers were, coincidentally, often the same readers who were buying IT, FRENDZ and OZ. As such, we suffered similar problems. Our intention was to encourage writers to write real fiction for the real world -- as it was and is. Other than that the writers had little in common -- Ballard's "condensed novels" had virtually nothing in common with Disch's elegant and formal prose. While Ballard dismissed the past as "irrelevant" and saw only a few surrealists as his masters, Disch read Thomas Mann and his ambition was to emulate Mann and other "conventional" writers. We never suffered from the constraints of commercialism found in even the best of the American markets. We didn't give a shit about money, circulation or public opinion. We were fundamentally idealistic and willing (as was Harlan Ellison in DV, of course) to go all the way. We were, perhaps, more consciously literary than the U.S. movement -- largely because SF was never quite the ghetto-taste it was for a long while in the U.S. There is much more snobbery in the U.S. (particularly in New York) than exists either in England or France. Raymond Chandler's talents (as Bester's, for that matter) were celebrated for their own sake in England long before they were treated seriously in the U.S. A number of our writers had hardly read any conventional SF and when they did read it were astonished by its badness. We didn't so much develop out of the SF world as alongside it. We were a generation of writers who had no nostalgic love of the pulp magazines, who had come to SF as a possible alternative to mainstream fiction and had taken SF seriously. The reason for our anger. our attacks, our idealism was because we genuinely did feel that a superior popular fiction could come out of SF. What united us, if anything, was our alienation from the SF world as well as from the mainstream world -- our enthusiasm for many kinds of literature, from Jacobean drama to Nabokov -- and we agreed about nothing. We argued and fought and despaired of one another. I, for instance, never could read Nabokov.

We were trying to find a viable literature for our time. A literature which took account of science, of modern social trends and which was written not according to genre conventions but according to the personal requirements of the individuals who produced it. NW never had a policy, as such. When we tried to editorialise about one, we became confused. What we tried to avoid, in the large-size issues and later, was to take notice of the commercial SF world. We occasionally knocked the writers with reputations -- Blish, Heinlein, Sturgeon and others -- but only because the critics discovered to their astonishment that these people could scarcely write on any level worth reading. We came to these writers late (I had a crash-course in SF in 1963 when I read a run of ASTOUNDINGs of the "Golden Age" and was horrified at how bad all these writers like Asimov, Del Rey and others were), usually because we had only a passing familiarity with SF. The potentiality of SF had sparked our imaginations.

When we came to study the actual big names we were disappointed. Bester was my first introduction to "real" SF. I remain a fan of his. I thought all SF was like that. Harness was another writer I admired. Most others seemed pretty tame -- merely boring. I suspect that SF is written for people with very weak imaginations. I remain astonished at how boring most SF still is. I read maybe one book a year, in the hope that I'll find what I originally hoped to find. I admire Leiber, but he hasn't really written any SF, as such, of late. Everything else seems to fall apart before it begins. Set backdrops, set dialogue, set characters (who behave out of character at the drop of a plot stitch). I read a Niven, recently, because I thought I should. I couldn't believe how bad it was. No plot worth the name. No original ideas. Remarkable!

In short, there was no conscious "New Wave" policy. We did what we felt was worth doing. And we tried to convince a few others it was worth doing.

SFR: Did you ever try to lose the "New Worlds -- used to be SF -- must still be SF" label which was then attracting the SF reader?

MOORCOCK: I wanted a general audience, including SF readers. The sort of audience who could take imaginative fiction and other ideas for granted. I felt that SF had left the ghetto -- that the kind of fiction we were printing was, in fact, mainstream to the generation who bought NW. In the main the big size NW stopped addressing the traditional SF audience, making our references general rather than relating to SF (by and large). It depended, of course, on who was writing what. We had, as I say, no hard and fast "policy". The mood was

libertarian in nature. We were trying to supply a bit of hope to those who wanted unselfconscious imaginative fiction. I could go on saying different phrases like that forever. We did what we thought was worth doing. We changed (not always for the best) when it seemed a good idea to change.

SFR: Is modern fiction too tied to popular approval?

MOORCOCK: Most modern fiction is crap. Worse than SF. More hidebound, even than SF. Modern social fiction has become a degenerate form in the hands of all but a few writers. Self-consciousness has attacked enthusiasm. The same has happened, in my view, in most modern American SF. College courses produce crap. Writers like Delany who have concentrated their attentions on such things have become blowsy and dull. Sf conventions and seminars produce rotten writers -- they turn good or potentially good established writers rotten because they find they have an easily pleased audience. An easily-pleased audience is a bad audience for writers. Therefore, I avoid, in the main, such places. One can only "convince" a reader by entertaining him first. A writer must constantly be making real demands on himself. If he becomes an oral story-teller (in essence) or, in other words, a performer, he is as good as lost. There is nothing easier in the world than to be able to get a crowd of 20,000 on its feet, waving and cheering, at a rock and roll gig. It's much, much harder to play very good music without any frills and keep that audience's attention.

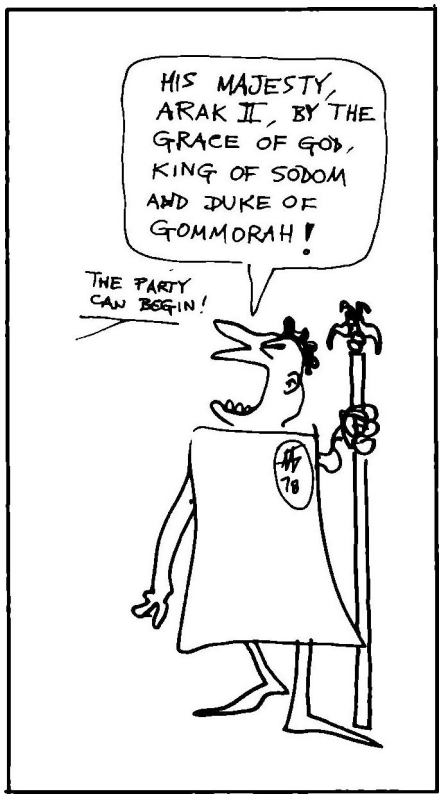
I've tried both. One is achieved by cheap tricks. The other is achieved by hard work and slow (if any) gains, but it lasts much longer and earns you respect rather than adulation. A little respect is a big help. Adulation makes you silly.

SFR: Did not the majority of "new wave" writers use shocking or controversial elements to gain attention -- was this not a performance, an act?

MOORCOCK: I don't think any of the regular NW contributors set out deliberately to shock. They were just dealing with factors of the world as they saw them. They weren't sentimental -- like Delany for instance -- they were angry. But they were essentially laconic about the stuff they saw around them. You have to look at the world and find humanity in it somewhere -- but you do have to look at the world first and not turn away. The best NW writers kept a steady gaze on the whole picture, I think. But this was what SF readers, with their preference for airy speculation and escapist "ideas" (moral conundrums scarcely related to any actual experience of life) found distressing.

SFR: Perhaps the essential difference between "new wave" and "old wave" is that the former is consciously present-culture oriented and the latter attempts to explore a totally alien reality?

MOORCOCK: Some of the best aliens have appeared in so-called "new wave" SF -- Barry Bayley's in ALL THE KING'S MEN", M. John Harrison's in SETTLING THE WORLD, Benford's in IF THE STARS ARE GODS, all of which try to deal with the modern world




in some form or other. For "alien" in old SF read "phobia" and you get a lot of the stuff identified. For "alien" in some SF read "alienation" and you get some of what the authors are about identified. I'm actually shocked and horrified by what's tacit in so much old SF -- particularly an almost psychotic misogyny. You're inclined to weep for the terrors which must trouble Heinlein and Niven, for instance. Poor sods. Howard Hughes syndrome.

SFR: Should speculative fiction serve a purpose; if so, in which areas?

MOORCOCK: Fiction serves only one purpose. To formalise and interpret the experience of its readers. Anything else it tries to do is extraneous. That isn't to say one should make "moral investigations" -- but they have to be on behalf of oneself and one's readers. I'm not talking here, of course, about escapist fiction which primarily sets out to confirm prejudices already existing in the society from which it springs. Most SF writers are escapist writers by that definition.

SFR: "Literature gives us the insight of memory without the wounds of experience" -- Samuel R. Delany. Agree?

MOORCOCK: Delany's aphorisms are always silly. I think he has become one of the silliest people in science fiction, in fact. Doubtless if you're trying to avoid the "wounds of experience" all the time, that's the sort of rubbish you write. Flaccid, high-sounding pseudo-structuralist trash. That's what happens when you spend your time lecturing to captive audiences..

SFR: You did much work in the fantasy field, an escapist literature; in what manner did you bend the rules of the genre to alter the result?

MOORCOCK: Most fantasy fiction is escapist and therefore misanthropic in a fundamental sense. What I tried to do in my fantasy fiction was turn the thing round and produce simple, humanitarian fables. They celebrate human strengths and weaknesses. That's all I've tried to do. Anything else would destroy the framework and fuck up the reader's expectations. If I'm using a popular form I won't fuck up those expectations. That would be a contrick I'm not prepared (he said pomously) to employ.

SFR: If Bester typifies SF as you "wanted" it, can you detail what elements appeal?

MOORCOCK: Bester's style is good, his humanity and his essential libertarianism is what I like. The ending of STARS where he has Foyle give the people the power of life and death has always struck me as being one of the few SF conclusions which suggests that Man is to be trusted, warts and all. There are very few SF stories which are not, it seems to me, at root misanthropic.

SFR: Near the start you said that you felt you weren't getting through to the readers -- are you now? Are they reading it "right"?

MOORCOCK: New kinds of narrative sometimes do take time to catch on, though it may seem unlikely that FINAL PROGRAMME seemed far out in 1965. Since then we have a much more sophisticated readership, I think. It's never mattered, I agree, if the reader "gets" everything as long as he enjoys the book. But few people were enjoying the stuff at that time! That's why I had to "go back", as it were, worried that I'd lost touch. I can't write unless I feel a reader's enjoying what I write -- even if it's only a few people at first.

SFR: Your major "hero" (in output) is "The Eternal Champion" (aka Erekose, aka Corum, aka Dorian, etc.). Where did the idea of the character originate? Are he and his milieu, symbols, Erekose being symbolic of "Everyman"?

MOORCOCK: The Eternal Champion idea was one of the first I had. The idea of a reincarnated hero isn't new, of course, and derives from folk-lore. Literary influences were Haggard, Merritt, Howard (in ALMURIC, I think) and Poul Anderson (THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS). The "Everyman" aspect of the idea is, to some degree, my own. I used the symbolism implicit to the idea (and that of the "multiverse") to put some simple, sentimental, and, to my mind, worthwhile points across. To interpret any of my stuff like a cross-word puzzle or in "linear" terms is to miss the irony and the paradox. Interpretation is up to the reader. If the reader does not like doing that and doesn't like the work, that's fine. The "Cosmic Balance" is a crude form of symbol.

I'm attempting all the time to find equilibrium between unchecked Romanticism ("Chaos") and stifling Classicism ("Law"). Pinnochio and Jiminy Cricket. Pierrot and Columbine. Ego and Superego. Make your own choice. And in form I'm always looking for a combination (that will work) of the epic and the novel -- or the romance and the novel. You will notice that I call very few of my books "novels" because they are not, classically speaking, novels. They are romances. Scene and idea (allegorical concerns) in general take precedence over characters. In the Cornelius books this is not the case, I feel. I've tried to combine "romantic" and "classical" methods there. Humour and irony can achieve the same result in some ways. That's why I'm attracted to comedy as a vehicle. The same moral arguments are debated again and again from my earliest (THE GOLDEN BARGE) to my latest (GLORIANA).

The trick is to look at them from as many different viewpoints as possible. That was why I invented Jerry Cornelius and why other writers used him in order to join in the "debate" at one time.

SFR: I was just going to ask about Cornelius. Is he a satirical character, and if so, what on?

MOORCOCK: The Cornelius books are not satire. They are ironies. I don't like satire, by and large. There are, of course, satirical elements in a good many of my books -- from the "Kane" stuff onwards -- but satire isn't my main concern. Certainly, one hopes, as a writer, to hold a mirror to one's world, but I wouldn't call myself a satirist in any real sense of the term.

I'm not convinced enough of my own opinions...

Also, a point. A lot of the NW stories dealt ironically with the forces of cynicism and misanthropy which conspire against us. This doesn't mean that the writers were cynical and misanthropic. On the contrary. Most of the typical NW writers were ironists. And ironists are often mistaken for cynics, it seems. Ah, well.

SFR: Since Jerry Cornelius is a definite aspect of "The Eternal Champion", which war is Jerry fighting?

MOORCOCK: Jerry (a quote from the Hawkwind number I used to do) is "the veteran of a thousand psychic wars". That's what ties him in with the EC.

SFR: Erekose is a victim of his multiverse and Cornelius a victim of his own failings. These are two examples that prove much of your output is concerned -- from Jesus Christ (another J.C) in BEHOLD THE MAN to your finally publishing MOORCOCK'S BOOK OF MARTYRS, which firmly established The Eternal Champion as a martyr. Why... Do you believe we are all martyrs?

MOORCOCK: I don't think we are all martyrs. I am against the idea of martyrs as I say in the introduction to BOOK OF MARTYRS. I believe that people become martyrs at the will of other people because other people need martyrs as well as heroes. I don't believe in either. I believe in models -- in examples. I have personal models of people who I think live well. That's the best you can provide in the place of "heroes". Christianity and its emphasis on martyrdom has produced in my view a somewhat weird kind of society. Self-denial, altruism and other positive virtues are not, in my view, the same as martyrdom as it's commonly understood. Martyrs do exist. I think they should not. I give Glogauer short shrift in some respects. He is turned into a martyr because he is too weak to find his own destiny. He had to follow a pre-existing one.

SFR: Many of your romances also -- culminating in the ultimate debacle between Victorianism and hedonism in DANCERS -- are concerned with an exploration of morality. Do you have a moral exactness or only the will to see individual morality?

MOORCOCK: Each person (according to good old-fashioned anarchist ideology) should work out his own morality, his own destiny, while bearing in mind that his self-interest is very likely to be the interest of the society at large. My own Utopian dream (which I agree is not that realistic) is to be found in the "Christmas" chapter of CONDITION OF MUZAK. I believe in decentralisation and the destruction of the State as a conception. I believe that working people know their interests best. "Don't follow leaders"... I believe that there are cynical (often unknown to themselves) interests at work in the world warping and spoiling what you might call Man's original virtue. These ideas, in sentimental or religious form, are silly, however, I don't think they are in essence silly.

The Cornelius books are, if you like, a sophisticated attempt to find a way through the shit in a big modern city. THE DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME stories are all to do with the same question -- finding the balance between individuality and social conscience.

SFR: That's something like the ideas of the socialist and fantasy writer, William Morris. Do your views accord with his. Have you read him?

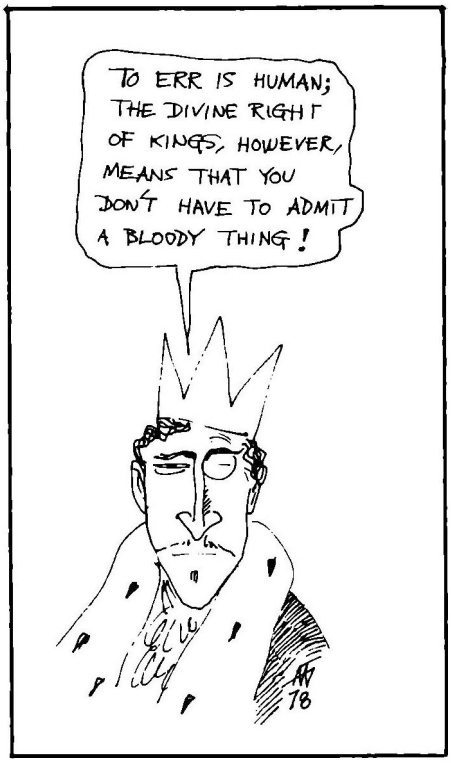
MOORCOCK: I'm an anarchist. Therefore, I don't believe in Utopias. I don't think a lot of Morris's fantasy books. Mass production is fine if it gives people cheap goods and so long as the producers own the means of production. Morris is very attractive, but a bit reactionary. I'm all for technology so long as it liberates people from mindless work (or is merely enjoyable or convenient), but I'm against centralisation, against the idea of a "state". I love cities and think that they are to many of us our natural environment. But we must find ways of maintaining our humanity in the face of all forms of totalitarianism (including modern capitalism) which finds it convenient to encourage cynicism in people. I hate Von Daniken, Desmond Morris, Lyall Watson and all other pseudo-scientific writers who are tacitly trying to rob us of our humanity, our morality, our natural tendency to co-operate with each other. Smaller units might produce a better world.

I would like to see the experiment attempted, but have little hope of ever seeing it on any big scale in my lifetime. But that doesn't mean I have any nostalgia for a non-existent rural Eden, as Morris did. I write about industrial/technological society by way of celebration. Most SF writers do not. Mechanistic attitudes are fundamental to most "technology" SF and are just as disgusting as the reactionary "back to the land" stuff. Who wants to be a bloody farmer when they were born in Ladbroke Grove? Not many of us.

SFR: Speaking of Utopias and morality, and to call in the best SF writer I know: Have you read any Ursula K. Le Guin -- her DISPOSSESSED?

MOORCOCK: I've read U.K. Le Guin. I find her worthy and somewhat dull. I like her children's books and some of her short fiction better than I like her long books for adults. She's admirable in a way, but very boring, tending to make a meal out of rather obvious observations. I respect her, but I don't enjoy her. She might be, like Vonnegut, for instance, a sort of pre-intellectual writer -- dealing with the ideas that an intellectual writer gets through before he actually starts work. I'm like that in my less ambitious books, I suppose. BEHOLD THE MAN, for instance, tends to overstate the obvious. I find it a very boring book, possibly for that reason.

SFR: Recently, your output has dwindled dramatically, and has also begun to concentrate for the most part on the female side of things, where once you used exclusively the male. Why?




MOORCOCK: I don't quite know why I find more interest in female characters at present. Perhaps women, like Cornelius, are more socially mobile. Perhaps I identify with them better; Una Persson has taken over (in short stories recently written) from Jerry, that's true. GLORIANA actually has two main characters (one male, one female). Maybe I see the female tendency to self-sacrifice as a bad thing (martyrdom again) and seek to counter it. A lot of the UP stuff is about that. Also GLORIANA.

But my current book, MRS. CORNELIUS BETWEEN THE WARS is actually a first person narrative by a man who claims to have known Mrs. C. during the twenties and thirties. Mrs. C. figures in it, but often (as with Jerry in ENGLISH ASSASSIN) very much by her absence from the stage. Male characters supply dynamic more easily to a straightforward genre story which is why I've primarily used them in the past, but early (unpublished) stuff of mine would use female characters. I like women a lot. Or I should say I like women more than I like men. The best are the best, in my view. But, of course, there are sexual and sentimental factors to be considered there. Coming through a marriage and various other episodes causes one to stop and think, too.

George Meredith, one of my literary models (or heroes), began to write increasingly about women as central characters after the break-up of his first marriage. One seeks to find the faults in oneself, maybe. He wrote MODERN LOVE -- still one of the greatest 19th century poems about love -- as well as DIANA OF THE CROSSWAYS, THE AMAZING MARRIAGE and so on. But since my next book isn't really to do with any of that, you could say that I have taken a holiday from the obsession. This next book will be about two years in the writing, which is a far cry from three days...

I'm writing less, but I feel I'm writing much better and with increased complexity. It causes me a certain amount of physical (psychosomatic) pain when I'm working in a very concentrated way, so I'm even slowing down there and spreading the work-load over a longer period so that I'm not influenced to finish too soon by any pain (itself a result of anxiety -- I've always suffered a certain amount of it, primarily in the form of migraine attacks).

SFR: One phrase jumped out: "The female tendency to self-sacrifice". What do you mean?

MOORCOCK: In a Christian society, in particular, women (in particular) are encouraged towards a form of self-destruction. Is that good? Am I wrong?

SFR: Not in my opinion. I thought you meant woman at any period of time, not now. In the new type of writing lay the wish that sex should be treated with more attention than hitherto. Why have you yourself used so little sex, and very little -- at all -- explicit?

MOORCOCK: I never thought sex should be treated with more attention than before. We never set out to "change" commercial SF. That was really a concern of the Ameri-

:an "taboo-breakers". I never ac-:epted there were any taboos to break. I was merely concerned with seeing a more humane, varied and better-written form of fiction developing. I've written quite graphically about sex when I've needed to (in some of the Cornelius stories, especially in THE ADVENTURES OF UNA PERSSON and CATHERINE CORNELIUS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY) but a lot of time I haven't felt I needed to. You write about what obsesses you. What obsesses me is humanity in sexual relationships, not the form the sex takes or who fucks whom or why. In UP&SS there are some fairly graphic descriptions, but there's irony in them and, anyway, that is what the book's about, on one level, at any rate.

I was told by more than one publisher that FINAL PROGRAMME and BEHOLD THE MAN were too sexually explicit and were "meant to shock". GLORIANA has enjoyed a similar response from at least one recent publisher. I think the sexual scenes (such as they are) are perfectly ordinary. Obviously, a lot of people don't. There you go.

SFR: "(Obsession) with relationships" plus your earlier comments on balancing out various seemingly irreconcilable divisions. I detect desire for balance and harmony. But to leave SF: You have done several songs and records and been involved with the group HAWKWIND. Can you say something about that?

MOORCOCK: My involvement with music came about fairly naturally. I had been a professional (and unsuccessful) musician. When Hawkwind asked me to work with them, I agreed, first doing material, later performing it. Out of that came a request from UA to do the "New World's Fair" album and other projects. I'm currently working on long-term projects with Pete Pavli and have agreed to do some work with Blue Oyster Cult and possibly one or two other bands. I enjoy the rock world, but I'm somewhat reclusive, socially, so get easily exhausted doing too many gigs. Haven't done one for a long time now.

SFR: A little confusion exists as to your influence on the SF trilogy based around Hawkwind and written by Michael Butterworth; can you clear that up?

MOORCOCK: I outlined (very broadly) the idea for the first "Hawklords" book. Mike Butterworth did all the work, apart from a little work by me in the first chapter.

SFR: And now. Where and who is Michael Moorcock now?

MOORCOCK: I am now 37 (38 when this is published). I live with Jill and my cat, Tom, just across the street from Hilary and my three kids, Sophie, Katie and Max. We travel a fair bit. We live in our house in Yorkshire a fair part of the time and have a flat in London. I am constantly broke since I have four households to maintain (I also pay my mother's mortgage) and live well, have the company of a few close friends and am probably pretty happy, by and large.

SFR: Mr. Moorcock, thank you.

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# LETTER FROM IAN COVELL

'The next letter brought statements like "...I would argue, very firmly indeed, that the majority of (new worlds) writers were more sensitive to the pain of others, more concerned with human relationships, value and so on, than any of your more sentimental writers (predominantly American) who were prepared to write about hope and joy without ever convincing me they were anything but soupy liars. Bad writing is implicitly depressing... The optimism must come out of the material, you can't just smear it on top like honey on garbage the way so many of the Americans do -- too afraid to follow through the implications of the material. In my view, most of those sentimental writers are fundamentally much more misanthropic than even, say, Sladek, who is, I think, probably misanthropic at root.... SF is more of a folk-art than literature and, being mainly naive, contains little of the irony found in literary fiction from Chaucer onwards. Irony is, for one thing, a stylistic distancing device to maintain objectivity. If you're writing about, say, atrocities in Vietnam, you need something to keep your eye steady while you deal with it. If this is mistaken for cynicism, then there is nothing you can do because you are dealing with the basic experience and way of looking at things of the reader. In fairness, I'd probably have to agree that all kinds of SF are equally misanthropic -- Heinlein and Sladek. I can't get on with Vonnegut or Nabokov because I find their ironies too heavy, their view of the world very hard to take. Perhaps 'ungenerous' is a better word than misanthropic. The only difference between Heinlein and Sladek, by that definition, would be that Sladek can handle a much subtler and more rewarding range of writing. And I'd rather read an openly misanthropic writer than a hypocritical one..."

'There was a lot more, but:

(1) I think you can work out what I said to get this response;

(2) That phrase about honey is peculiar because only a few years ago I applied the phrase of my own making "fire upon a lake of mud" to the new wave. Odd;

(3) My views will, I think, never accord with Moorcock. He judges things with a writer's eye, when he says "bad writing...depressing", he means the style or character or plot depresses because he can see how it might have been better. Personally, I try to see what the author is trying to say to me; if his feeling is good but his prose is lousy (Doc Smith) I like him; if he is saying humans are basically shits, with brilliant prose (Delany) I hate him;

(4) I didn't see it for a long time, but it strikes me that irony in science fiction has to be very heavy to get noticed at all -- as MM says, it is based against the everyday life of the reader and its experiences. That probably accounts for why the new wave stuck so closely to present or very-near-future ideas, the irony could only work at this time. True SF is so alien to experience that relating to irony does not and can not work -- I do not think the "ironic" aspect has ever been mentioned, and that was probably because SF fans judged it as an internally consistent reality -- which is our forte -- instead of a more intentionally convoluted and often inconsistent (ironic) manner.

'I think that word "ungenerous" is the most accurate. I am not too certain about "sentimental" writers, since along about there he also said, "...I don't think it's fair of you to make general literary statements, dismissing writers who refuse to go for easy answers and work considerably harder on every level than do your Delanys and Le Guins, who are much more guilty of psychowanking..."

'Point: I think the basic difference between SF and mainstream/new wave, can be summed up as the former studies the societies and humanity en masse, while the latter, for the greater part, concentrates on the individual. Unfortunately, literary critics demand the latter and ignore the former as "facile" and "unworthy".'

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# LETTER FROM MICHAEL MOORCOCK

November, 1978

'Got the November SFR a few days after the September issue, so here's another letter.

'Darrell Schweitzer is going to think I'm running a campaign against him since I'm always taking issue with him about something. This time it's ASIMOV's and Dale and all that again. I know that I speak for a number of writers when I say that payment is not the first consideration when submitting to a "market". As far as I recall I have never submitted stories to any of the US sf magazines with the exception of FANTASTIC when Cele Goldsmith was running it -- she had a knack of attracting writers (and artists) which must have had very little to do with her word rates. Apart from giving encouragement to new writers -- Disch and Zelazny in particular -- she published work by Leiber and Ballard which at that time could have appeared nowhere else in the US. She also got Ed Emshwiller to do some of his best sf cover paintings and interiors.

'The only story I ever submitted to an established US sf magazine was the one which appeared in FANTASTIC. Some other stuff of mine appeared in Ted White's FANTASTIC, but that, I think, was either asked for by Ted or submitted by my agent. I have had one story published in PENTHOUSE. I refused to let them publish it unless they guaranteed that nothing would be changed. They changed -- for no reason I ever discovered -- the name of a character. I have consistently refused to submit work to PENTHOUSE since.

'I have refused to have work of mine submitted by my agents to PLAYBOY because of PLAYBOY's policy of tampering with work. Similarly I have submitted nothing to ESQUIRE because I have seen them ruin stories (some by Harvey Jacobs are a good example -- we ran the "whole" stories in NW) by stupid editing. I don't actually know what rates Terry Carr pays, but I'd write for him any day because I respect him as an editor and feel that he would respect me (his record at Ace speaks for that). Similarly I would write for Harlan Ellison because he has been courageous enough to try to change the status quo (as Carr did with the Specials). I don't wish to sound too pious, but I've taken risks as a writer and as an editor and I tend to respond to those writers and editors who also take risks.

'I have never had any great urge to submit anything to Damon Knight for ORBIT, but I respect his intentions and hate to see Schweitzer bad-mouthing him.

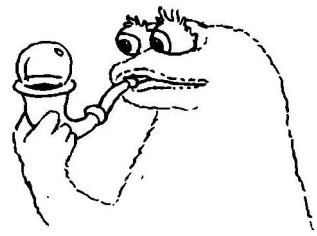
'Dale recently wrote to me with a raft of suggested changes in my book THE LIVES AND TIMES OF JERRY CORNELIUS. They wished to cut out every "fuck", for instance, because they needed, they said, to sell the books in family supermarkets... I wrote back and suggested they make many more changes -- as many as they needed to make sure of the K-Mart market -- and they appear to have missed any irony and are gratefully going ahead...

'Schweitzer is talking about commercial genre-writers, I suppose; those who wish to placate and please the public. That's fine. But I didn't get into science fiction to do that and I see absolutely no point in compromising merely to "make a sale". There are more honorable ways of earning a living. In one sense I write for the idealistic 18-year-old that I once was. He is my idea of my "market". If I betray him, I betray myself and every reader I possess. In short, if I followed Schweitzer's logic, I'd be poisoning the well. If I'd wished to make a lot of money I would have remained in commercial journalism.

'I think I speak for most of the writers associated with NEW WORLDS -- both American and British -- when I say that it is more important to write exactly what one wishes to write and then let the public decide whether it likes it or not than it is to receive a high word rate.

'UNEARTH will let a writer "get through" to that public. ASIMOV's actively discourages a writer from trying to do that. ASIMOV's represents for me the worst sort of cynicism (partly because it is to a fair degree unconscious) while UNEARTH, with all its faults, represents fairly rational idealism. UNEARTH will let me get my story to a public which can then decide if it likes what I've done. Fuck the word rate. The public has, in the long-term, better taste and judgment than most editors (including me) and the fewer barriers there are between me and them the happier I am. Dale and ASIMOV's are in the business for the money -- the public's money. They'll make any compromise to get the public's money. I won't. That's why I won't have anything to do with Del Rey Books or others like them. It's why -- now that I know what they're like -- I'll have no dealings with Dale in future (they have other books of mine still to publish, unfortunately). It's why I prefer to publish a lot of my work with Don Wollheim, whose tastes and opinions are often directly at odds with my own but who is enthusiastic about publishing the books he likes and who is -- a rare thing in the US publishing world these days -- his own master, responsible only to a public whose judgment he respects. True, he has "reformed" from the Ace days -- when he put some atrocious titles on books and edited somewhat prissily -- but how many people make fewer compromises as they get older?

'Most US editors now have thousands of shareholders to account to and that is why commercial US publishing is becoming more and more like the world of US television. Any one of us who helps in any way to encourage that tendency will be to blame in the long run.



'Incidentally, I tell a lie about US magazines -- I've submitted work to ARIEL because the editors are idealistic and, for the moment at least, independent. As it happens, they paid me a very decent rate. But that wasn't why I sold them the story. I know, by the way, that there is no financial reward for doing one's best not to compromise, but it sometimes happens that after years of low-rates "integrity" pays off!

'Just this year three or four writers who have never made very large sums from their fiction are at last being paid well for the work -- Spinrad and Disch are two of them. It doesn't necessarily pay to be pure of heart, but then it doesn't necessarily pay to be wicked, either....

'There is no justice in the literary business. If there were, a writer like Leiber, who is ten times better than a writer like Tolkein, would be winning a "Mouser" award rather than losing a "Gandalf". Another victory of fanaticism over common sense and good taste. And does "professional" these days mean "corrupt" -- or am I missing something?

'Doesn't the sf world depress you? It seems to condense all the worst aspects of infantilism and stupidity to be found in the world at large.

'Well, at least I'm happy. I should be grateful.

'PS: And if the hounds of Spring are on Winter's traces does it help suspend disbelief if we know whether they're wolf- or fox- ? '

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# THE REVIEW OF SHORT FICTION

## *By Orson Scott Card*

OMNI - DESTINIES
ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE
ANALOG - GALILEO
FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION
GALAXY - UNEARTH - AMAZING

Make a quick count. My calculator and I have deduced that there are nine regular science fiction magazines churning out stories every month or quarter or whatever. That is a lot of short fiction.

So much, in fact, that there just isn't any way to review every issue of every magazine and both do justice to all the stories and fit them into one issue of SFR with room left over for anything else. The result? Reviews of short fiction are hard to find.

And I don't know about you, but I have found that terribly frustrating especially when my first few stories had just appeared and so far as I knew only three people had read them: my mother, Ben Bova (who bought them), and a fan from Nebraska who wrote in to correct my punctuation. Short fiction needs the same treatment novels get; after all, some of the finest work in science fiction is done in the shorter forms, and yet it never, or almost never, gets reviewed unless it's in an anthology (particularly a best-of-the-year anthology) or a collection.

This column is going to try to alleviate the problem.

But I'm not crazy, and neither is Richard E. Geis. We still can't review every issue of every magazine. What we can do, however, is have some poor sucker (me) go through every story in every issue of every damn magazine and decide which stories are good enough or important enough in that poor sucker's opinion that review space ought to be devoted to them. And even then, each review is going to be pitifully short. But when you see that a particular story is reviewed here at all, you know that in at least one (perhaps) intelligent reader's opinion that story is worth reading.

Worth reading? So you needn't continue in ignorance, here are the standards I use for judging. A story is <u>good</u> if it moves me emotionally, impresses me intellectually or artistically, or just plain delights me. A story is <u>important</u> if it is good or if it is by somebody who has a long history of writing wonderful stories (a big name) or if it does something unusual, even if it does it badly.

With those wholly arbitrary standards of judgment firmly but flexibly implanted, let us dive in:

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The first of the stories set on Medea, the world created at Harlan Ellison's request by Hal Clement, Poul Anderson, Larry Niven and Frederick Pohl, have appeared in print, and if those stories are a good guide, the whole collection is going to be one of the best we've ever seen. So far two of the stories have appeared in ANALOG -- "Swanilda's Song" by Frederick Pohl (Oct) and "Hunter's Moon" by Poul Anderson (Nov). A third story, "Seasoning" by Hal Clement, appeared in IA'sSFM (Sept-Oct).

The stories are set in the same milieu, peopled by the same mix of human beings, three-segmented fuxes, and balloon-like ouranids, and bound by the same natural laws that apply to good old Mother Earth. All three stories can be considered hard sf, too. But there the similarity ends.

The strongest of the three, "Seasoning", is also earliest in Medea's history. Human explorers have not yet discovered that the two dominant species on Medea are intelligent. But the alien presence is still there, in the form of a sentient diamond called Beedee. Able to absorb and store as much information as 200 million human brains, only faster, Beedee has become indispensible to the humans on Medea. Unfortunately, Beedee was made by a race of aliens long before man was a twinkle in australopithecus's eye and accidentally deposited on earth -- there ain't any more where Beedee came from. And so when Faivonen, whose wife died on a previous expedition with the diamond, sets out with Beedee on his arm to explore an anomalous valley, he is keenly aware of the need to protect the bright and thoughtful creature. It soon becomes all too clear who needs protection -- and from whom.

The idea of the story is good (which is much of the battle), but what pleased me most was the very careful and unobtrusive way that Clement set up a story that depends utterly on science without making it, even for a moment, feel cold or inhuman. I cared about Faivonen and liked Beedee, and at the end felt that good old thrill of having been fairly beaten by a skillful writer. I didn't guess what was going on -- but I could have, if only I'd been just <u>that</u> much smarter. And yet it isn't a puzzle story -- it's a human story with a lot of good old-fashioned emotion.

I loved it.

I also really liked "Swanilda's Song", but I confess a weakness. Much as I enjoy satirical writing, I find it hard to get deeply involved with characters in such stories. Pohl is an excellent writer who has long been able to craft fine stories and in the last few years has also been writing prose that brings out the ugly jealousy in my nature. "Swanilda's Song" is not his most important work -- but it's funny without seeming to try to be funny, and Pohl has accomplished the feat of making me, a confirmed cigarette-hater, glad that a character smoked incessantly. Add to that a megalomaniacal balloon and hallucinogenic semen, and you have a story that, in lesser hands, would have been laughed out of the editor's office -- but that in Pohl's hands

is a delight to read.

"Hunter's Moon" is also a fine story. Occasionally flawed by too-obvious exposition and too much explanation from the author, the counterpoint of three separate themes in one completely unified story can still serve as a model of craftsmanship. A married couple find their marriage in trouble, primarily because of their specializations -- Hugh is working to establish rudimentary telepathic contact with a dromid, while Jannika is trying to do the same with an ouranid -- and the strong difference between the species pulls them apart. At the same time, the ouranids, because of human interference, are beginning to migrate away from their homeland, and the dromids, in religious fervor, are killing as many of them as possible to keep them from upsetting things by not dying and decomposing where they ought. The telepathic contact also causes Jannika's ouranid and Hugh's dromid to try to kill each other.

And, incredibly enough, Anderson is able to resolve all three conflicts in a single climactic incident that makes it clear that it's impossible to make a move on a world without affecting everybody -- and everything -- else on it.

All three stories are so strong that I can't wait to get my hands on the forthcoming book, MEDEA: HARLAN'S WORLD. The Old Masters are doing some of their best work for this project.

●

If I had to choose a favorite out of my September-October-November reading, however, it would have to be a masterful novelette called "Little Goethe" (F&SF, Nov). M. Mendelsohn, the author, is an English university professor and this is his first story. I gnash my teeth at him. I bite my thumb at him. Because he set himself the task of a first-person narrative by a genius, a child prodigy who never grows old enough for puberty, and so is adopted by family after family in order to stay alive and satisfy his lust for learning. I've tried first-person narrative. It's hard. And to write "Little Goethe" on his first time out -- we need a writer's union strong enough to keep people like him from publishing and making it hard on the rest of us. It moved me deeply and I admired his writing.

I have had enough of stories about protestors. I guess I was too young in the sixties, but I have no memories of noble young people changing the world with their rage. Instead, I have memories of meaningless violence and savage attacks on the institutions most likely to keep us on the road to civilization. So I did not welcome Greg Bear's story "The Wind from a Burning Woman". Another piece glorifying protest as an end in itself? I put off reading it for more than a month. And then, because I had to have read <u>everything</u> in order to write this column, I forced myself to read it.

It isn't just another story about a protestor. Or if it is, it's done without idolatry but, instead, with understanding. The uselessness of Giani Turco's protest is balanced nicely with the righteousness of it, and even as it becomes clear to her that she has only hurt, not helped her cause, a good and heroic young man who sympathized with her dies trying to stop her. Which gesture meant more? A puzzling question, especially when coupled with the fact that justice, whatever that is, was all on her side. Sometimes Bear seems to be saying, it isn't enough to be right. The story appeared in the October ANALOG, and for all that the future history it depends on is implausible, the story itself works beautifully.

●

Some stories are worth reading just for the ideas they develop. I didn't think anything new could be done with telepathy -- but in "Tunnels of the Minds" by Kevin O'Donnel, Jr. (GALILEO 10) I discovered I was wrong. In fact, O'Donnel has made family ties more important by far because of telepathy than they are to us now -- and by linking sex with a penetration of the mind has reversed sexual roles: it is the man who must be penetrated by a female before a marriage can be considered consummated. And in "The Incredible Living Man" in the same issue of GALILEO, John Kessel puts a new twist on the old resurrection theme, creating an unforgettable character in the process -- a man who agrees to be a temporary host for a dead man's soul and then tries to hold onto the dead man's wife and fortune even after he has gone again.

(GALILEO 10 also tried the experiment of having three writers do stories based on the same cover illustration. While none of the stories is really remarkable, it's interesting to see the wholly different ideas the writers came up with to explain the art. Sort of a smaller version of the Medea experiment.)

●

It is ironic that some of the finest work (and, I think, some of the most likely to endure) in our field comes under the heading of fantasy which "doesn't sell". Of the major magazines, only FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION regularly publishes any at all. But perhaps the very sparsity of good short fantasy in the magazines makes the occasional taste of it all the better. The October and November issues of F&SF had four haunting fantasies that won't leave me alone.

Jane Yolen's "Brother Hart" is a fairy tale, and a good one. That should be enough of a recommendation -- fairy tale is the hardest genre to do well, I think, having failed at it several times. Equally brief, but with a modern setting, is "He-y, Come on Ou-t!" by Shinichi Hoshi, translated by Stanleigh Jones. Imagine finding a bottomless hole, in which you could drop all the refuse and detritus and sewage and radioactive waste of the world! Then imagine where it all comes out ...

"Cassandra", by C.J. Cherryh, puts the Homeric prophetess in a near-future setting -- a woman who can see everyone's death but her own, and yet is utterly unheeded despite her many warnings, her many attempts to save even one person. And Michael Bishop's "Effigies" has

his by-now-expectable fine literary style mixed with a deep understanding of human -- and inhuman -- nature. I can't get his image of wizened old men growing up from the ground like corn out of my head.

●

Humorous science fiction rarely gets into the best-of-the-year anthologies, and even more rarely into the Hugo and Nebula finals. But that doesn't mean I can't love to read stories that try to achieve nothing more than my amusement. ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE seems to be trying to corner the market in one-joke stories; and ANALOG seems to be putting its tongue in its cheek more and more. But the story I found funniest in the last few months is "Project Hi-Rise" by Robert F. Young, which appeared in the November F&SF. Now we know that the Tower of Babel was stopped, not by the confusion of tongues, but because God was just clever enough to send them a skilled labor negotiator to help "smooth things out". It makes you want to look for the non-union label.

Other stories just for fun: "The Adventure of the Global Traveler" by Anne Lear puts Shakespeare and Sherlock Holmes together through the good offices of Moriarty, who also diddlies H.G. Wells. Incredibly enough, that combination worked (IA's FM Sep-Oct). "Errata Slip" by Edward Wellen, in the same issue of IA'sFM, "corrects" some errors that appeared in the ENCYCLOPEDIA GALACTICA.

●

"Lost and Found" by Phllis Eisenstein (ANALOG, Oct) suggests that if things keep disappearing around your house, you should be flattered -- it means you are going to amount to something, someday. The same issue of ANALOG contains "Art Thou Mathematics" by Charles Mobbs, in which it is painfully proved that mathematics does not discover natural law -- it makes it.

Barry Malzberg's "Varieties of Technological Experience" (ANALOG Oct) is funny -- if you can laugh with a knife in your gut. Instead of crushing rocks, your life imprisonment for a political crime could be spent trying to square the circle or devise a perpetual motion machine or discover antigravity. Fritz, assigned to invent the universal solvent, actually succeeds in his impossible task -- and uses his discovery to play a practical joke on his captors.

●

Why is it that science fiction writers like to think up clever ways of punishing people? In "The Liberation of Josephine" (F&SF Sep), Charles Runyon has discovered that life here on Earth has another purpose -- this is a prison planet for another world. And those catatonic people in hospitals are just the folks who finished their punishment early and can go home now. A well-done treatment of a good idea.

Occasionally some fine writers put some excellent work into a story that, for various reasons, just doesn't quite come off. That does not mean the story isn't worth reading. It just means that the reader will probably feel a little dissatisfied at the end, despite having enjoyed most of the story. Such a tale is Edward Wellen's "Goldbrick" (F&SF Nov), a novella in which a most delightful ripoff of the U.S. Army succeeds all too well. Unfortunately, a highly implausible wargame between the U.S. and Russia is the linchpin of an otherwise plausible story; and Wellen's penchant for bizarre names strains credulity. In fact, I think what happened here is that Wellen, who is very good at humor, thought he was writing a pure humor story -- and the depth of his protagonist and the fine quality of his writing rather took him by surprise. Try as I might, I can't read the thing as pure humor -- and as a straight, if often funny, story the thing almost (almost!) comes off. I was very glad I read it, despite the frustrations.

●

Another almost-there story is "Indian Summer" by Neil Olonoff (UNEARTH Summer), which only fails because the climax of a well-set-up horror story just doesn't match what came before -- or rather, matches it too well and so doesn't horrify. Anyway, it was great to read a story in which somebody used Portuguese (my other language) correctly and for something other than guidebook phrases.

●

A failed climax is what also spoiled Charles L. Grant's "Caesar, Now Be Still" (F&SF Sep) for me -- but for the opposite reason. Where Olonoff led up to his climax so clearly that it wasn't a shock, Grant didn't prepare enough, so that I ended up thinking, "Where'd that come from?" Yet there are some images that are startlingly original (like people who sink into the earth, struggling to write a note as they are swallowed up), and Grant's writing is so good I almost didn't care whether he had a climax at all. Almost.

●

And Theodore Sturgeon's "Time Warp" (OMNI Oct) is a marvelous parody of Doc Smith's Lensmen told from the point of view of the mysterious, omnipotent being from the invisible planet who has the dammedest time saving the human race because the stout-hearted human can't quit being heroic. The only problem was that Sturgeon chose to write the story through the mouth of Althair, the storyteller (and protagonist) -- and so the language is insufferably condescending as the narrator talks down to his audience of Zado children. It was extremely annoying, especially at first, and took a lot of the snap out of the humor.

A new Asimov story is, by definition, an Event, and for those who love everything the Great Man has written (which includes me) the story "Found" in the premiere OMNI is not a disappointment. Over the years Asimov keeps getting better and better at writing believable dialogue and turning one-idea stories into really enjoyable reading. Here the one idea is a species of interstellar viruses that attack orbiting computers the way our more familiar viruses attack human body cells. Not Asimov's most significant story -- but then, who has to be significant every time?

●

I am pushing the limits the Editor set for me, and I still have three stories that, while they are not earthshakers, I still want to mention. "Thirty Love" by Jack C. Haldeman II (IA'sFM Sep-Oct) is a lovely little story about a man who, though he has spent his life in a competitive game, eschews competition at the last moment in order to give another guy a break. I like it better the more I think of it and reread it.

●

"In Alien Flesh" by Gregory Benford (F&SF Sep) is a fine story in which the human dilemma ends up, unfortunately, as an anti-climax to the marvelous alien Benford has created. Why can't they give a Hugo for Best New Alien of the Year?

●

And Dean Ing's "Banzai" (ANALOG Sep) comes perilously close to being just another of those shipwrecked on a hostile planet stories -- and then gets a lot better with the introduction of Shigeo, a Japanese holdout -- but not from World War II.

Pant. Pant. That's twenty-six stories that I liked enough to write about. Which isn't to say that the ones I didn't mention were clunkers. As proof of that I modestly mention that two of my own stories were among those appearing in issues of ANALOG that I covered here. Humility forbids me to say more than if I didn't think they were wonderful, I would not have mailed them off the magazine....

PS: In case you're wondering, the list of magazines at the beginning of this column is in a definite order. Not alphabetical. Not even, necessarily, in order of quality. They are in order of money. The money they pay writers. Which (with exceptions) is what separates the sheep from the goats.

PPS: I'm a story reviewer, not an art reviewer. But I want to make a complaint and sing some praises. The complaint (and some of the praise) goes to OMNI, which is printing absolutely beautiful illustrations for the stories -- which have less than nothing to do with what the story is about. The rest of the praise goes to Janet Aulisio, whose black-and-white illustrations in ANALOG the past year are some of the finest work I've seen. Not just because her illustrations have often appeared with my stories -- I'm perfectly capable of hating an illustration of my work. She does things with black and white that should, by rights, only be possible with color. And her illustrations enhance the story, complement it, and often illuminate aspects that only the most careful reader would catch. In short, Aulisio reads before she draws. A blessing on her head.

OMNI and DESTINIES

By Orson Scott Card

OMNI and DESTINIES both pay higher than the other magazines; they are both reaching many readers that the older magazines have never reached; they are both exciting new concepts in science fiction publishing. Yet they are going such different directions that I think it's important for us who read science fiction avidly to recognize what they are attempting before we try to judge how well they are succeeding.

OMNI is a slick magazine. The science is at the reading level of PSYCHOLOGY TODAY -- available to the layman but not insulting to the trained reader. More than two-thirds of the editorial content of the magazine is science reporting or science-related art. Less than one-third is fiction. What does that mean? Fiction editor Ben Bova has bluntly stated that in-group sf writing is out. This magazine is reaching readers (one million on the first issue, and that ain't just the folks who've been buying ANALOG) who have not read science fiction since they stopped reading ASTOUNDING in college. They do not want and cannot handle stories that take them completely out of the environment they are used to. There must be many handles they can easily grasp.

"Heh, heh, heh... you handsome DEVIL, you... heh, heh, heh"

That means that some things will be explained that regular sf readers don't normally need to have explained. It also means that, in time, the literary standards will be different (not necessarily higher) from those used by every other magazine.

In a way, then, Ben Bova as a fiction editor will be every bit as restricted as he was at ANALOG, though the restrictions are completely different. Yet, given those limitations, OMNI can be expected to produce some of the finest stories in the genre. Look for stories by Vonnegut and Bradbury and others whom the pulps could never afford to buy from today. But don't look for Ben Bova to win any more editing Hugoes -- because he's no longer editing sf for the fans. He's editing for the big bad world, and doing an excellent job of it, judging from his first issue (November 1978).

DESTINIES is reaching for an entirely different audience. With beautifully designed pages and excellent sf art, it is an attractive paperback book -- and it will undoubtedly succeed as it reaches those thousands of readers who avidly search the paperback racks for science fiction. But since these are already dedicated sf readers, Jim Baen is not bound as Ben Bova is. He can pull out all the stops and do an sf magazine as it ought to be done: with a budget and without taboos. Everything that made Baen's GALAXY wonderful without a budget is now in DESTINIES. And with a budget, Baen can actually pay money (more than any other magazine except OMNI) for, not OMNI's four stories a month, but rather a dozen stories per issue.

In short, any sf writer who doesn't submit first to OMNI or DESTINIES is crazy and doesn't like to eat (or writes too damn much for any one magazine to buy it all). And that means that we'll see exactly how good an editor Jim Baen really is. I think he's so good that DESTINIES will immediately become the leading publication within the sf community.

I have no bias here, folks: OMNI and DESTINIES have both bought exactly two stories from me so far and have paid tidy sums for them, but I'm just as happy to have my work appear in other magazines. I don't think either magazine will drive any of their competition out of business. Why not? Because just as ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE tapped a juvenile market that none of the other magazines was reaching, OMNI and DESTINIES are also creating their own audiences. Instead of hurting ANALOG, IA'SFM, F&SF, GALILEO, GALAXY and Ted White's magaines, OMNI and DESTINIES will get people reading short sf who have never done so before on a regular basis. If they like it (and I believe they will), they'll look for more.

And another point: There have been excellent editors in the science fiction field before, but it's hard to think of a time when there were more than two at the most who were really great at the same time. I'm of the opinion that right now we have more than two, all producing work they can be proud of. When was the golden age of magazine sf? With no offense to the Old Masters, I think it's day after tomorrow.

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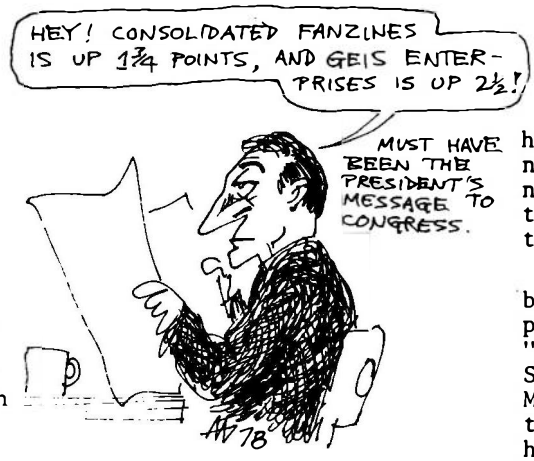
"EVERY EFFECTIVE NOVEL HAS A MESSAGE AND A MORAL. IT IS IMPOOSIBLE FOR A NOVEL TO BE EFFECTIVE WITHOUT BOTH. A NOVEL IS A MESSAGE, A LONG ONE. A PERSON WITHOUT MORALS CAN'T WRITE ONE." --KURT VONNEGUT, JR. (1969)

# OCCASIONALLY MENTIONING SCIENCE FICTION




I must confess I never expected to be asked to write an article about Fandom for a publication which has collected so many fanzine Hugos, and which, when I first started writing for it, was mimeographed and looked like any other leading genzine. (If you don't know what a genzine is, you prove the point we are about to make.) But it has come to our Noble Editor's attention that SFR is sold in enough bookshops and the GALAXY ads have netted enough "outside" customers that a large percentage of you, Dear Readers, are not Trufans, or even aware of what fandom is, beyond the vague sense of the term. Therefore, it is my task to enlighten you, and I take it on with great humility (a penny a word, right, Dick?), and some urgency too. We got a notice from the Fannish Inquisition* this morning that all these non-Trufan undesirables must be Ruthlessly Rooted Out. (The Ghrand Inquisitor, Ruth, is sick this week with Twonk's Disease, so the program will be Ruthless.) However, we have also been given the option to Convert the Masses first, via this article.

First, the True Fandom Test. If you know the answers to the following questions, you are among the Faithful, and may skip this essay, pass go, collect $200 and Alter's collection of Peggy Swenson books, but make sure you don't get kippled** in the process. He's picked up bad habits over the years.

The questions:

1) Who was Hoy Ping Pong?

2) Who sawed Courtney's boat?

3) Who is Walter A. Willis?

I know fans and potential fans have short attention spans (another way to spot the genuine article), so here are the answers:

1) A major blunder in Chinese diplomacy which precipitated the Great Staple War.

2) Courtney's boat was sawed by a man with a saw, but not enough people sawed him do it to secure a conviction.

3) An Irish saint, patron of harpists. Also an elder ghod, along with Bloch, Nyarlathotep, Tucker and Robert Whitaker.***

By Fandom, I mean a curious Catch-22 situation where you really aren't a fan unless you know what fandom means. First, to clear the ground: I don't mean the organized comics hucksterdom which calls itself "fandom" out of ignorance of the real thing. I don't mean Star Trek-ism, which strikes me as the beginnings of a new religion****. I also don't mean "fan" merely in the sense of enthusiast. You can't be a fan merely by reading science fiction. There's more to it than that.

I remember a couplethree years ago at a convention in Washington D.C. sitting up just before dawn in a hotel room with Moshe Feder, former assistant editor of AMAZING and publisher of PLACEBO, Linda Bushyager, publisher of K the (soon to fold, alas) fannish newszine KARASS, and one or two other people, paging through boxes of mimeographed magazines with titles like FOOP, MOTA, FOCAL POINT, CANTICLES FROM LABOWITZ and INTERPLANETARY CORNCHIPS. Linda's husband Ron, who didn't seem to share our enthusiasm, snored away on one of the beds. In the room adjoining ours an all-night party was going on. Outside in the hotel pool there had been some skinnydipping earlier, with a certain not-quite Adonis-like science fiction writer later bragging "I was the only pro nude there".

No one blinked, except at the blurry print in some of the sloppier fanzines. "Wow*," said Moshe, "there's a lot of history in these". Since Napoleon, Stalin, Chairman Mao, and that crowd were never known to contribute to fanzines, obviously he was talking about fan history. The history of fandom.

Which brings us to fanzines again. A fanzine in the traditional sense is not what you're reading right now. If SFR, LOCUS, ALGOL, WHISPERS, and perhaps THRUST are the only "fanzines" you have ever seen, then you have never seen a fanzine. Those are "semi-professional" publications, which behave like regular professional magazines in all ways but distribution. They're a new phenomenon in science fiction, although in general literature they have existed for years under the name of "little magazines". Fanzines are amateur publications, privately printed and circulated, rarely seen by more than a few hundred people. There are literally thousands of them going right now, and all attempts to keep track of them inevitably fail. Some only last an issue, then vanish utterly along with everyone involved.** Others, like YANDRO or AMRA may continue for twenty years and more. People within the inner circles*** of the science fiction community may receive as many as two or three a day, usually in exchange for written material (fanzines don't pay)

*You will be expecting them. Please pardon any delays. They'll get there eventually.

**An obscure reference, without which no fannish article is complete. Also vaguely obscene. Don't you just detest vagueness?

***Another obscure reference. This is getting out of hand.

****Sort of a cross between millenialism, 7th Day Adventists, and a cargo cult. The world will end in 2000, but there really is a Federation out there, and at the last minute the faithful will be beamed aboard the Enterprise, the women right into the arms of Mr. Spock.

*Note he didn't say "Goshwow", which would have made him a neofan, about which, more later. I think I'll go back to one asterisk for the feetnotes if you don't mind.

**If a geographic study were done, and an unusual number of cases were found to have occurred in, say, Bloomington, Illinois, we might be able to pinpoint a fannish Bermuda Triangle. But I leave that to the fannish mythographers.

***A marvelously paranoid concept with a long and venerable history in fandom.

**By Darrell Schweitzer**

such as articles, reviews, parodies, poems, stories,**** or letters of comment, these latter known among fans as "LoCs". (Pronounced "locks" and the source of innumerable puns. The lettercol in my fanzine, PROCRASTINATION, is called 'The Rape of the LoC'.)

The batch of fanzines at the Washington convention (Disclave) formerly belonged to a science fiction professional who, no doubt finding them taking up too much space, sold them to Moshe at $3 a foot (i.e. thickness of the stack) and much money had been spent, so you can imagine how many of them there were. Even these couldn't have represented a majority of the fanzines published during the period in which they were received. I don't think anyone in fandom, even Harry Warner***** gets everything being published.

In fandom. Not a place. Not an organization in the strict sense of the word, since there is no president, no board of directors, nobody collecting dues (except at local fan clubs, which are formal organizations, and at which some percentage of people will be fans in the strictest sense), no generally used secret handshakes. But still umpteen thousand fanzines, and conventions in almost every major city in the country, plus much of Western Europe, Japan, Australia and occasionally South America. At last report fans had been discovered in some 30 countries. Wherever there is science fiction, and a government which allows some degree of free and private publication, there will be fandom. Inevitably.

It is a curious thing which has grown out of science fiction. No other literature has anything comparable. Fandom is not a formal writers' group, nor even a bunch of people who come to hear favorite authors deliver speeches (although that is done, of course), but a genuine, viable, sub-culture with a good sense of history and tradition. How do you define a fan? I'd say a fan is someone with a sense of this continuity. Fandom is clearly not a passing fad, as something like Star Trekdom must inevitably be (unless it turns into a religion). It has been going strong for about fifty years.

The dim beginnings center around Hugo Gernsback, who founded AMAZING STORIES in 1926, and about whom I have little good to say in a recent ALGOL. He was not a good editor, pretty definitely a crook, and the magazine tended to be terrible, but in the absence of anything else he identified the genre. His magazines led the field only until something else was available, but that was enough, and the spark had touched the competition too. There are prototypes of fans and fan activity before Gernsback, notably the Lovecraft circle, which later fused with general fandom (a good case could be made for the 1927 issue of THE RECLUSE, containing HPL's "The Supernatural Horror in Literature" plus material by Clark Ashton Smith, Donald Wandrei, etc. being the first fanzine), but virtually all fannish historians agree that fandom began in the lettercolumns of the early magazines, AMAZING, WONDER and ASTOUNDING.

In those days, you'll recall, science fiction was laughed at, if it didn't draw simple blank stares. It was "pulp fiction" in the eyes of the literary critics just like DOC SAVAGE, THE SHADOW and all that. The orthodox academic view was it was illiterate trash unworthy of any notice. Of course, the readers knew better, but that didn't help. So the reader, scorned and getting paranoid, sought out others who shared this special knowledge. Before long people whose letters appeared in the prozine lettercolumns were writing to each other. Correspondence clubs sprang up and it wasn't much of a leap from there to small, privately printed newsletters and magazines circulated among these correspondents, telling what was going on behind the scenes in the field, reviewing current works (i.e. this issue's AMAZING. There were no books). These were the first fanzines, the first of which appeared in 1930, unless you want to count that 1927 RECLUSE, which many consider to be part of regular amateur journalism with which Lovecraft was heavily involved. Then the writers of letters and publishers of fanzines began to meet and form clubs, hold small get-togethers and the social fabric of fandom was born. Throughout the 1930s it grew steadily, until by 1939 fans could hold what they ambitiously called the First World Science Fiction Convention in New York. It drew about two hundred people, and a TIME reporter who treated it as a joke. Those were the days fans went around muttering the now venerable old saying, "It's a proud and lonely thing to be a fan".

Today it may still be proud, but fandom isn't particularly lonely any more, now that a world convention can draw 4000, almost every major book publisher publishes science fiction and there are more universities and highschools teaching SF than not--the very idea was surely inconceivable in 1939. SF has become respectable, so there's no need to hide away with other True Believers.

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Aren't you glad I went back to one*. Otherwise we'd be up to eight by now. Anyway, two kinds of stories appear in fanzines. "Fan fiction", is amateur at science fiction, as a rule inept. Otherwise it would sell professionally. "Faan fiction", or stories about fans and fannish situations, usually in the form of broad humor, is a different kettle of blog entirely. The amateur fiction does serve a purpose in providing a training ground for would-be writers, some of whom later make it, but it is seldom read by anyone except the very patient, friends of the author, people the author is blackmailing, and other would-be writers. To add to the confusion nowadays there are many semi-professional fiction magazines, usually in the weird fantasy field where there is no stable professional outlet. WHISPERS, WEIRDBOOK, CHACAL, etc. are not fan fiction magazines. They pay as well as the newstand magazines, and the fiction is generally of the same quality. To add even more confusion, some fanfic zines pay token rates (like a fifth of a cent a word) and pretend to be semi-professional. To read them is to know the difference.

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If you don't know who Harry Warner is, you are definitely not a fan. Any zine which does not receive a Harry Warner LoC by its third issue should quietly fold its tent and slip away into the night.

Shouldn't fandom have withered away, then? No, because by this time fandom had become semi-independent of science fiction, and aware of itself as more than just a group of enthusiasts. In fact, there are many fans who read little science fiction, and fanzines which only occasionally mention it. (Another Trufan test: If you can't see the point of a fanzine article which is not about science fiction, you're still a reader, not a fan.) Somewhere along the line personalities began to dominate the fanzines, professional lettercolumns, and conventions, and these people were not necessarily professional writers. The aforementioned Willis, for example, co-author of the fannish classic THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR (faan fiction allegory about Jophan's quest for the Enchanted Duplicator with which to publish the perfect fanzine, with apologies to Bunyan's PILGRIM'S PROGRESS).

The other author is Bob Shaw, now a famous science fiction writer, but respected as a fan writer for entirely different reasons. Some other professionals, Wilson Tucker (who usually signs his fanzine work Bob Tucker & is otherwise known for having invented the curious alcoholic regurgitation "Smmmmoooth!"), Lee Hoffman, Ted White, Terry Carr, Robert Bloch, etc. are also important in the fanzine world for their contributions thereto. These people are called Big Name Fans, or BNFs. You can be a BNF and a Pro at the same time, but one doesn't necessitate or preclude the other.

Fandom gradually became more interested in itself and the doings of other fans. The assorted wits, sages and crazies of fandom began to take over the stage from the pros, and traditions began to develop. Among these were the fannish "myths" which nobody who knew what they were about took seriously at all, such as the spurious deities, Ghu, Foofoo, and Roscoe*, every one of them the creations of the slightly twisted minds of the selfsame wits, sages and crazies. Additionally, some of these people, especially the ones in the third category, began to take on mythic dimensions themselves. For example, there was Claude Degler, a decidedly eccentric (even by fannish standards) fan of the 1940s who wandered about the country like some sort of messiah, proclaiming that fans were superior to the rest of the human race** and they should hurry up and breed lots of little supermen at his Ozark "love camp". Degler also founded many chapters of the largely imaginary Cosmic Circle, while freeloading off people until he was laughed down by saner fans who knew in what way madness lies. It was later discovered that Degler had been in a mental institution for a while. He left fan circles shortly after being chased up a tree in the Everglades by a Cosmic Slan disguised as an alligator, but he's still remembered and frequently referred to in fannish writings and jokes. He's just one bit of lore the newcomer eventually picks up.

If you were to wander into a science fiction convention and pay close attention to the conversations, probably the thing you'd find most amazing*** would not be a fan's encyclopedic knowledge of the field (which is something many fans don't have, especially those who no longer read the stuff), or the generally high level of education (most college educated, and many Ph.D.s) or the diversity of age groups (8 to 80, literally), or even the fanzines you might see passed about, but the language used very casually by one fan (the plural is fen, by the way) talking to another. There would be a lot of unfamiliar words, like fout, egoboo, apa, neo, repro, fillo, and the like. You see, fandom has developed its own jargon, which I've laid on extra thick in this article to make you aware of it. Most special interest groups do this eventually, but fans have done it often deliberately and always with special delight, until such words get into general circulation in fandom, and the various books about the fannish phenomenon, such as Warner's ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, find it necessary to preface everything with glossaries. When I first contacted fandom in the 1960s, the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F, sort of a clearing house for new fans) sent me a little dictionary.

Here are some examples of what you pick up from context in fandom. The word fanzine is derived obviously from "fan" and the "zine" of "magazine". The suffix "zine" gets stuck on all sorts of special terms. Or it can stand alone as a word. It is pronounced "zeen", by the way, not rhyming with "brine" as one sometimes hears from neofans. The older form of the word fanzine is fan-mag, but this has been out of use for about 20 years, right along with scientifiction (or STF) which is what Gernsback called the field originally. One does not make money publishing a fanzine, but you do get egoboo, the boosting of the ego, when your efforts have been appreciated. A fanzine for general circulation in fandom is called a genzine (general interest fanzine), as opposed to one for an amateur press association (apa) which is called an apazine. A fanzine of exceptionally low quality and/or illegible repro(duction) is a crudzine, frequently put out by neofans (new fans) who don't know any better, and end up short-changed in the egoboo department. They might even get discouraged and gafiate, or get away from it all (gafia--the state of being gafiated, an alternate version of this dread condition, when you're forced away by non-fannish --mundane--considerations is fafia.) The term has changed meaning over the years. Originally it meant get away from it all into fandom, i.e. join. Now it means leave fandom. Another word which has changed meaning is sercon (serious constructive) which used to be a term of derision, meaning some pompous fugghead (need I define that?) who tries to Clean Up Fandom or otherwise make a long-winded nuisance out of himself. Now it means anyone who is seriously interested in SF (the traditions and concern with fandom having caused there to be a need for such a distinction) and it means literally what it says. Serious, constructive. Sercon writing means criticism, analysis, and other things directly concerned with science fiction.

And so on. You won't find very much of this at a worldcon or a large regional because only a frac-

*Ghu was the original, as far as I know, and the most widely known. We honor him by inserting an extra "h" which looks like a typo but isn't in words like "bheer" and "ghod". Ghu was reported to be a beetle monster dwelling on the sunny side of Vulcan which made its wishes known through its zombie, Donald Wollheim. Vulcan was an alleged planet inside the orbit of Mercury, which turned out to be an astronomical mistake. It doesn't exist. No relation to the home of Mr. Spock, about which some Trekkies are not sure. Foofoo was a vile rival cult, a heresy. Roscoe is a beaver-like creature which flies overhead and causes mimeographs to malfunction. I'm not sure how he can be exorcised.

**This was just after A.E. Van Vogt's persecuted superman novel, SLAN, appeared in ASTOUNDING. Fans found it very easy to identify with the hero and have since, mostly in jest, used the expression "fans are slans." Dwellings cohabited by many fans, really the first communes, were called slanshacks. Before SLAN many fans took H.G. Wells' 1937 novel THE STAR BEGOTTEN to heart. Wells had no contact with fandom that I know of.

***Or thrilling wonder.

tion of the attendees are hardcore fans. They just read about the convention somewhere and came to hear Harlan or Isaac quietly discuss science fiction. Later, when the parties open up, and the big names, along with everybody else, dig into the booze (provided free by the convention) the unwary wander-in gets hooked, in the pleasantest way possible. He gets to know people, make friends, encounter fanzines and the whole bit. Soon he is corresponding, and one day he notices how naive and unknowledgable the neos seem, and he's a hardcore fan. It's too late. It happens to the best of us.

The Disclave I mentioned earlier had more hardcore fans there than most. The Truefans were separated from the chaff Sunday night by a musical event. It was a parody of THE MUSIC MAN called THE MIMEO MAN and it was written by fans Eli Cohen and Debbie Notkin. It was about fans and situations unique to fandom, and was loaded with ingroup references and peculiar fannish humor. (Later it was published in fanzine format, now out of print, no doubt.) Outside reporters, if there were any, were certainly puzzled by lyrics like this:

Seventy-six genzines led the Locus poll
With one hundred and ten one-shots close at hand.
They were followed by rows and rows of the finest offset illos,
The dream of every bigname fan.
Seventy-six genzines caught the morning mail
With one hundred and ten one-shots close behind.
There were more than a thousand schemes
To exploit each theme
There were puns of every shape and kind.
There were unicorns and rocketships on every sheet
Illustrators, illustrators all along the way
Book reviews and people knews and LoCs from fans
Every fan having his big fat say.
There were fifty famous artists on each ToC
Illustrating, illustrating, finer than before
Editors of every kind and
Feghoots with a groan in mind
And each groan was louder than before.

It's impossible to annotate all that without losing the sense of it all. There was a lady sitting behind me who wondered aloud, "What's a genzine?" Hopelessly confused. Obviously a new, or else not a fan in this sense at all.

What is the purpose of fandom? Basically, it exists for itself. Occasionally someone makes noises about "furthering the cause of science fiction", but in general fans are looking for friendship and a good time. It is possible for virtually all your friends to be fans, your wife or husband to be fans and your children to be fans, along with all your business associates. (Which means either you're a bookseller or a writer, publisher, editor, artist.) You go to conventions to meet people you don't see otherwise, and maybe correspond with. After a while, programming and guests of honor become secondary considerations. In an interview I did with him, Gordon R. Dickson described it this way:

"It just happens that science fiction, which used to be something everybody giggled about, has turned out to be something fairly respectable, and it has developed by accident and by the situations of the field into a condition in which most of the in-group are like a small, warm community."

Isn't there a danger, I asked, that this cozy little community might be so pleased with itself that it becomes conservative and resistant to change? The answer was an emphatic no. "We renew twice a decade", said Dickson, and in a way he's right. There is a constant influx of new fans and new writers, and the people who were creating a stir five years ago are not the ones who are doing it now, either in fan or strictly professional circles.

Fandom is a thread of continuity through all the constant change. The curious thing about science fiction is that almost all its leading practitioners come from the ingroup. The writers read science fiction all their lives before writing it. Quite frequently they were active in fanzines before"turning pro", and as we've already seen with Bloch, Tucker, Shaw, Hoffman and others, many continue as fans after doing so. Easily half the active fans who aren't want to be writers, and some of them make it. Some who have include Isaac Asimov, Arthur Clarke, Ray Bradbury, Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, Damon Knight, C.M. Kornbluth, James Blish and Marion Zimmer Bradley. If I go on any further (and I could) it would sound like a Horatio Alger story.

Also on the serious side, fanzines provide outlets for all sorts of genuinely worthwhile secondary material about science fiction. Before the semi-professional magazines appeared and commercial publishers became interested in books about Sf, they were virtually the only place such material could be published, except for occasional articles in the prozines themselves. Some fans at least are discriminating about their SF and won't read just anything. They like serious criticism, and SF criticism, including such classics as Knight's IN SEARCH OF WONDER and Blish's THE ISSUE AT HAND, evolved out of the fanzines rather than academic sources, it tends to be better written, without tediously bad writing you find in regular critical journals. (Of course, now there are academic SF journals too, almost as bad, but seldom read by anyone but other academics.)

Are you interested in fandom? If so, all you have to do is make contact. Everything else will follow. Send away for a few of the better fanzines. Pay for a single issue, not a subscription, then write a LoC to each. If you're at all literate and have anything to say, some of these will be printed. You'll get the issue in which your letter appears for free, as is the custom. Other faneds (fanzine editors) will see your letters and perhaps send you their zines in hope you'll write them letters too. Do so.

Two publications are recommended highly:

THE NEO-FAN'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM, Editor Bob Tucker, published by Linda Bushyager, 1614 Evans Avenue, Prospect Park, PA, 19076. 75¢. Profits for this go to fannish charities, Down Under Fan Fund, Trans Atlantic Fan Fund (these two are funds to bring noted conventions to and from Australia and Europe to attend major conventions), and the FAAn Awards. (Fanzine Activity Awards. Peer group awards

for best fan work, based on the assumption that the fanzine Hugos are now meaningless due to over domination by large circulation semi-prozines.) The GUIDE will tell you far more about fandom than this article can.

FANTHOLOGY 76, edited and published by Victoria Vayne, P.O. Box 156, Station D, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 3J8, Canada. $3.00. An anthology of best fanzine writing in the year 1976. Both humorous and serious (sercon). Major fanwriters are present, including Hoffman, Tucker, Shaw, Warner, Mae Strelkov and Don D'Ammassa.

There are two major fan histories published as books, quite different from one another. You'll recall the Monty Python routine* about the election between the Sensible Party and the Silly Party. Well, the Sensible book on fandom is Harry Warner's ALL OUR YESTERDAYS (Advent) which is an enormously readable, objective, fact-filled account of fan doings from the dim pre-history to the end of the 1940s. This is probably the best book yet published on the subject.

The Silly version is Sam Moskowitz's THE IMMORTAL STORM, (Hyperion), which seems archetypically sercon in the old, bad sense of the word. If the pompous title isn't enough, Warner summed it up nicely when he said that if read immediately after a history of World War II, THE IMMORTAL STORM does not seem like an anti-climax. The style is also curious, quite different from the recent Moskowitz whose articles, for example those on William Hope Hodgson in the revived WERID TALES, have been excellent. The writing is ponderous, pretentious and frequently (and inadvertantly) screamingly funny. But there are facts in it, and it is of considerable interest simply because it is a document from that period of fan history. (Written in the late 40s and early 50s and first published as a series of articles in a fanzine, and covering roughly the same timespan as the Warner book.) But fans weren't as narrow-minded and fanatic as Moskowitz depicts them. Recently ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF magazine got a submission (promptly rejected) of an article about fandom by an anthropology professor who seemed to have derived all his background from Moskowitz. Incredible distortions. Sheer fantasy for the most part. (But I was interested in the religious statistic: 5% "pagan".) Also of note is Damon Knight's THE FUTURIANS, (John Day), about the club of that name, to which many soon-to-be major SF names belonged. It along with the Warner book provide an interesting counterbalance to the Moskowitz. A second "volume" of the Warner history, covering the 1950s, has been published as three mimeographed pamphlets. Presently they're hard to obtain. I queried the publisher and got no reply. If any dealer has a stock of them, let me know. I want a copy. A fannish newszine (as yet unseen by me) which sounds promising is Mike Glyer's FILE 770, 50¢ from 14974 Osceola Street, Sylmar, CA, 91342.

*Monty Python references are very fannish. Before that it was Firesign Theatre, before that (mostly in Britain) the Goon Show.

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ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 17

an old argument & not worth going into here, even when he is right in dismissing the Effinger book but for all the wrong reasons (i.e., he thinks the type of book is poor rather than realizing that it's simply Effinger's inability to write up to the demands of his form).

'But I think the real point of my continuing battles with him & you has to do with the still too often unacknowledged fact that sf is so huge a category (& I hate that word & what it connotes) now that it contains many audiences all of which enjoy their sf even if they don't see much in others' -- & you did publish Brunner's column to make up.

'In re the letter from George Warren, a friend of mine attended a scholarly gathering on film in Los Angeles & one of the speakers, a producer, told the gathered people this: The 3 questions asked of a movie, in order, are: (1) Is it good? (2) Did it come in on schedule? (3) Did it come in on budget?

'A TV show has a fixed budget, so if you as director go over you don't eat for a few months. Ergo the questions are reversed, & go: (1) Did it come in on budget? (2) Did it come in on schedule? & finally & very much later, (3) Is it any good? He added, is it any wonder that TV shows are so bad? Ladies & gentlemen of the jury .... money sure talks funny sometimes, don't it? Well, now, I'll be able to get angry at you 6 times a year. But that's fun too. Peace.'

11-22-78 I'm more and more concerned that an issue of GALAXY has not appeared since the September-dated issue.

I have sent two book review columns to editor Hank Stine in response to his telephone requests. And the latest call several weeks ago was to ask for a change in the format of the column [more about that aspect below]. During that call he mentioned a stretch-out of 6-weeks between columns, and then said he'd call when he needed a column.

I remember that J.J. Pierce had put together two or three complete issues before resigning as editor. Those issues have not appeared.

But the most likely reason for the delayed GALAXYs is that the publisher is waiting for distributors to pay him for previous issues, so he can use that money to pay typesetters and printers for a new issue. That is hand-to-mouth publishing, and says there is no reserve, no operating capital...and very little hope.

We shall see what happens.

The format change Hank wanted was...was...*choke* a return of Alter-Ego. Yes, Alter is to be my partner in reviewing science fiction and fantasy for GALAXY.

"I was listening, Geis, and I want to take this opportunity to say how great an editor Hank Stine is. He saw how dynamic and perceptive I am in print, and saw how dull and bland you are in print and did the only logical thing."

Alter, I'm pissed enough as it is. Don't rub salt in my wounds or I'll quit writing the column altogether and let you go pound sand somewhere.

"Huh! You need me, Geis. I'm your bread and butter. I'm the excitement in SFR, the fizz in GALAXY, the---"

Bane of my existence! Why did I ever create you???

"You were just lucky. Now, let me tell you what books I think we should read next. I think---"

OUT! LEAVE ME ALONE! GET BACK DOWN INTO YOUR DUNGEON!

"Listen---"

AWAY! BEGONE! [What was that ritual spell I used to use?]

"Okay, okay... I'll join you later when we sit down here to write the reviews."

*Sigh....*

# FOUNDATION #14 'The Review of Science Fiction', an academic-style British journal, edited by Malcolm Edwards, has an article titled "Essex House: The Rise and Fall of Speculative Erotica" by Maxim Jakubowski which seems to me to praise the edi-

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 37

"How do you handle the negotiation of book contracts?"

"I don't negotiate. I just sign the contracts and send them back."

--Isaac Asimov

Last week an editor at one of the richest New York paperback publishers proudly boasted to me how little she had managed to pay for a simply wonderful new novel, whose author had been too naive to ask for more money. Business as usual, I thought to myself. You read in the newspaper that paperback rights of some piece of hot property have just sold for a couple of million dollars; but most of the time, editors are scrounging around trying to find bargains for a couple of thousand. That's why a writer needs an aggressive literary agent working on his behalf, to argue and rant and rave and finagle a reasonable price out of these tightfisted misers who spend publishing money as meanly as if it came from their own pockets.

That's what I always believed, anyway. Then I talked to Isaac Asimov. He uses no literary agent. He trusts editors to be nice to him. He says it works: If anything

# *LOVE THY PUBLISHER: THE ASIMOV METHOD*

## *By Charles Platt*

the terms they offer him are more generous:

"Publishers have actually raised my royalty rates of their own accord. For instance, Doubleday now lets me have a straight 15 percent on all my books. They did it, not through my suggestions at all. I still get small advances, but that's because that's all I want. If you get a large advance there's too much risk you won't be able to make it back."

(In other words, a risk that the royalties earned by the book will add up to a smaller sum than the advance money that has already been paid to the author, thus theoretically leaving the author indebted to the publisher. In practice such debts are seldom, if ever, called due, or even applied to subsequent author-publisher deals. Every author I know regards it as a risk that the publisher should take. Every author except Isaac Asimov.)

"It's standard with me to explain to the publisher that, if I don't make back my advance, I'll return what hasn't been made back. But no publisher has ever picked me up on that. And on two occasions when they gave me an advance for a book which for one reason or another I didn't write, it took me the devil's own time to argue with them, first to take back the advance, which they absolutely refused to do, and second to let me write a different book on the same contract so that that same advance would go to the new book; and this they agreed to both times with the greatest reluctance.

"Now, on my autobiography (due in 1979 in two volumes) I've been given, over my protests, by Doubleday, three-and-a-third times my ordinary advance, which still leaves it a fairly small advance, you understand, but now I have to worry. Those two volumes are probably going to be $19 apiece. My fans are the most loyal fans in the world; they're also not the richest...."

Some simple arithmetic: I may be wrong, but I have reason to believe the advance on the autobiography was $10,000. If the price of each two-volume set is to be $38 and the royalty rate is 15%, Asimov will earn $5.70 royalties for each pair of volumes sold. Therefore the publisher must sell 1,755 two-volume sets before the royalties earned equal the advance money already paid. Even if Doubleday somehow managed to sell less than 1,755 copies (by some incredible fluke or amazing mismanagement), they would surely still make money out of the book -- especially when paperback rights are sold. And Isaac Asimov is worrying about this? It sounds crazy, but:

"There's a certain amount of method in my madness. In the first place, at every publisher I deal with I'm considered a member of the family. I can walk in freely without being announced. I can kid around with all the secretaries, I can kiss 'em and hug 'em and make a lot of noise and nobody throws me out, and that's valuable to me. It's not money in my pocket but it makes happiness, it creates a feeling that writing is fun. And then secondly publishers don't argue with me. I say I want to write such-and-such a book, and they come up with a contract. I decided I wanted to do a book of lecherous limericks. I said to Walker and Company, here are sixteen limericks. As soon as I write a hundred I'm going to put them together in a book. They had no great desire to do books of limericks, but because I had the desire they eventually put out three volumes of my limericks. Then, when I walked into Doubleday and said, do you mind if I do an annotated version of DON JUAN, they didn't mind. Not only that, of their own accord and over my protests, they made a big gift book of it. They did it only because I wanted to do it; in fact I remember when they discussed it in their editorial meetings one editor scribbled something on a piece of paper which, through a series of mistakes, I happened to see. It said, Oh, let Isaac have his fun. And then when I did my autobiography, I came in with 640,000 words. Any other writer would have been told, cut it in half. I mean Kissinger wouldn't write a 640,000-word autobiography. My editor took it right up to the president and said to him, what do we do? He said, put it out in two volumes. And you know, I would rather have that than enormous advances and constant arguments over whether I could do a book because it might not sell well."

I asked if he had ever argued over, for instance, royalty rates.

"No. Never."

And had he ever been taken advantage of by a publisher?

"Not in my opinion. Frequently publishers have increased the amount I am paid, over my protests. AMERICAN WAY magazine, I've been writing a monthly column for them for four years. They've just voluntarily raised my pay rate. I never asked for any. I've been writing for FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION for twenty years. They raised my rate once in the past over my protests and recently when they announced a general word-rate raise I had to write them a special letter to tell them I wouldn't accept a raise for my part. So you know my constant struggle is to keep them from giving me more money."

Of course, you can argue that Isaac Asimov is a special case, and publishers have every reason to want to promote goodwill with such a well-known author. And if Doubleday, for instance, is apparently generous, we must remember that they can afford to be: They have made a lot more money out of Asimov than Asimov has ever made out of them.

But the point about being free to write whatever you like, without hassles, without restrictions -- isn't that what all of us writers are supposed to want above all else? Loving thy publisher may make you not-quite-as-rich, but it obviously has its advantages.

(Isaac Asimov's quotes were excerpted from a long interview that I conducted for ARIEL magazine, on topics of more-general interest. The interview will appear in the next issue of ARIEL.)

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ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 35

torial policy of Brian Kirby for aiming at a kind of literary/speculative content for his books...which in fact resulted in the death of the line because of poor sales.

Brian thought there was enough of a market for high-quality quasi-porno science fiction and fantasy and surrealistic fiction.

There probably is such an audience, but not in the porno shops, smoke shops, liquor stores, etc. where Mr. Luros' output was placed.

It may be Brian was ten years before his time.

But these novels were essentially packaged as porno---sex for sex' sake---and they didn't deliver what the buyers were led to expect.

The buyers wanted one-handed sex books [high porno content intended to arouse and assist in the intensification of pleasure from masturbation-with-the-free-hand]. When they didn't get that kind of high-erotic-level in the Essex House line (with the exception of my RAVISHED and RAW MEAT), they avoided the books afterwards.

I've always felt that a true sex novel had to deliver. I always tried to write sex scenes that would make me want to jack off, and (if jacking off) would make my pleasure more intense. I think that is an honorable and ethical position, and I'd be writing sex novels today if there was a decent-paying market for them.

If I were a porno film producer that would be my thinking.

[Porno films, of course, killed off the porno novel market.]

Most of the Essex House books had a high sex-content ratio, but it was "empty" non-erotic sex. Even turn-off sex. Their intent was to explore sex, make it bizarre, weird, shocking, to make it serve the master of intellectual interest, satire, etc. That's fine, but, again, Brian Kirby's problem was distribution. Essex House never made it, to my knowledge, into legitimate books stores.

If Mr. Luros could have arranged a few hundred quality bookstore outlets, Essex House and Brian Kirby might be famous---and his authors famous----by now.

Subscription rates for FOUNDATION are $7.50 for three issues for USA and Canada. Address: FOUNDATION, The Science Fiction Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS, UNITED KINGDOM.

## # LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN

November, 1978

'Here is a little scoop for you from the LOS ANGELES TIMES (don't know the date as a friend clipped it sans date and sent it to me), verbatim:

'"FIRST RELIGIOUS JOURNAL FOR NEWSSTANDS FORCED TO FOLD

'"Last fall, former science fiction writer ((sic)) Roger P. Elwood attempted something never done before in U.S. religious circles: edit and publish a financially successful Christian magazine that did not sell subscriptions but relied only on mass media rack and newsstand sales.

'"Nine months later, his INSPIRATION periodical, published by Petersen Publications in Hollywood, has been discontinued with October's issue.

'"Personnel and financial problems are blamed for the demise, and Elwood and his staff have departed, though Petersen Publications is still very much in business.

'"The company sells 150 million copies a year of specialty publications such as HOT ROD, SKINDIVER, MOTOR TREND, TEEN, GUNS FOR HOME DEFENSE and scores of other slick "magabooks" and periodicals related to hobbies and sports.

'"INSPIRATION was Petersen's first religious venture. The magazine's name, concept and contact lists are up for sale."

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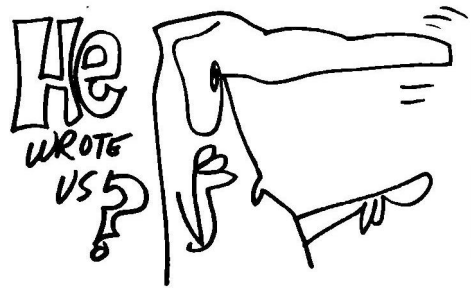
'Ho ho ho.'




## # LETTER FROM ALAN DEAN FOSTER

November, 1978

'In eleven years of writing professionally, this is the first time I've felt it necessary to comment on a negative review of my work (though certainly not the first opportunity to do so).

'As a once-upon-a-time would-be critic I remember how easy it is to slip into the trap of substituting vitriol for insight, sarcasm for analysis and the chance to be smarmy for some honest observation. Ms. Wilma Wright's feelings about SPLINTER OF THE MIND'S EYE are not the reason for this reply. The book's taken better shots, and she is entitled to take aim as readily as anyone else.

'But when you start talking about a writer's "predictable habits", you damn well better be accurate and employ some specific examples to buttress your arguments. Accuracy I will comment on. As to specifics, Ms. Wright utilizes none whatsoever.

'She refers to the books MIDWORLD, THE END OF THE MATTER and the novelette SNAKE EYES, in addition to SPLINTER. She says, "In these stories you will find cute striped furry aliens, jewels with bizarre powers, jungle worlds all supplied with the same Ancient Temple a la H. Rider Haggard...."

'In MIDWORLD there is a very large furry alien. In SNAKE EYES there is a moderately cute one. In THE END OF THE MATTER there is a striped one. The implication in Ms. Wright's words is that each of the three tales contains a "cute striped furry alien". I suggest she keep her aliens as well as the books separate. Oh yes, there are furry aliens in SPLINTER. They are not striped and not very cute. I suppose if they didn't have fur Ms. Wright would say I'm prone to cute striped bald aliens.

'"Jewels with bizarre powers". They exist in SNAKE EYES. They exist in SPLINTER (or rather, it does) because George Lucas wanted it there. They are absent from MIDWORLD and END OF THE MATTER.

'"Jungle worlds all supplied with the same Ancient Temple a la H. Rider Haggard". There are no temples in either SNAKE EYES or MIDWORLD (I'm beginning to think Ms. Wright read SPLINTER four times and looked at the blurbs on the other works mentioned). The worlds of SNAKE EYES and THE END OF THE MATTER are not jungle worlds.

'As to this business of all my female characters coming in three basic types, I've already indicated

Ms. Wright's delightful ability to reduce things to their basics by eliminating everything that doesn't fit her assertions and altering inconvenient facts. That's rather like preparing twelve different dishes and calling the result soup because you're a rotten cook.

'To continue: She classifies them as Screaming Secretaries, Cold Bitches, and Old Hags:

'1) Screaming Secretaries: "This sort can be found in the background, yelling fervently and/or fainting. They are sometimes young and beautiful and always unable to handle adventure of any sort".

'I've examined the four works in question and darned if I can find a single character (including Princess Leia in SPLINTER) who fits this category.

'2) Cold Bitches: "Women of this type can be found as villains throughout his novels (emphasis mine). They are mostly young and beautiful, always competent and ready to castrate Foster's major human male character, The Young Hero".

'I don't know what oily cavity of Ms. Wright's psyche the castration business emerged from, and I find it distasteful to pursue. If she's referring to a physical act, it exists only in her imagination and not in any of the mentioned works. If she's using it as a metaphor for female domination, I can only think of one character who might fit, and she's not in one of the listed books. Though with fresh insight at hand, I might consider creating such a personality now.

'3) Old Hags: "Members of this final..." Oh, shit, I'm getting sick of this garbage. I presume Ms. Wright is referring to the character of Halla in SPLINTER, who is old but hardly a hag. As to Mother Mastiff in SNAKE EYES (and other related books), she is a continuing character in a series. No doubt Ms. Wright would prefer I change her each book, thus giving the boy Flinx a different mother each time around. Intriguing, but not consistent. Nor do I regard older women as "hags" or describe them as such. That derogatory term is Ms. Wright's, not mine.

'I could also mention the female characters in BLOODHYPE, DREAM GONE GREEN, YE WHO WOULD SING and others, but why waste time on someone who mixes words in her brain like silly putty. The professionals I'm most closely involved with include my two agents, Virginia Kidd and Ilse Lahn, and an editor, Judy-Lynn del Rey. If my female characters fell even slightly into the sick slots Ms. Wright so casually created I'm sure I would've heard plenty about it years ago, from ladies of far more ability and perception than she.

'Sorry to waste so much paper with this, Dick, but I'm a stickler for accuracy in my work and I like to see it in any reviews of same. I can ignore such negativity in personalzines, and respect it when well thought out by such reviewers as yourself or, say, Spider Robinson. But when someone tries to pass off such narcissistic dyspeptic twaddle as a review in something I respect as much as SFR, it's time to comment.

'(Addendum: I'm usually a very quiet sort, Dick. But in this case I invite Ms. Wright's rejoinder. Let her show me any examples from the books she mentions to support her position, and I'll be glad to comment further. In SFR if you wish, or in private correspondence with her. Personally, I think SFR has better uses for its space. I wonder if she read the last part of Damon's "Beyond Genocide" speech?)'

*((Sorry, Alan, through a series of forgets and missed opportunities, Wilma hasn't yet seen a copy of your letter. She will when she gets her copy of this issue, of course, and I imagine her response will be prompt to you or to SFR for publication in #30.*

*((As for my opinion: even if a given author does have a tendency to use certain types of characters over and over (and many, many do!), or certain scenes or certain plots...so what? The question is how well they are used. And, with some writers, practice makes perfect.))*

## # LETTER FROM WAYNE KEYSER

December, 1978

'I really had to write to tell you how much I liked ONE IMMORTAL MAN. Considering some of the garbage that sells well these days, I'm shocked that you couldn't have sold it. Of course, it doesn't seem like the sort of thing that would have been bought ten or even five years ago by any major publisher, but did you by any chance consider PLAYBOY? The book has a certain daring (even -- in a sense -- ruthlessness) about it that might have fit in well with the type of SF they sometimes publish.

'The only really disconcerting factor in the novel was the fact that, although it appeared to be set many hundreds, even thousands of years in the future of Earth, contemporary place-names survived. That might have worked in the modern American reader's mind for nations that have existed for longer than anyone alive can remember, but it works less well when the surviving names are those of half-baked newly-emerged nations which will have their next revolution in a year (at most) and never be called again by their current names. On the other hand, I can't suggest anything better.

'I always wondered what Conan would have been like if he thought with his brain instead of (or in addition to) his groin. Vik seems a little like that -- and he comes across very well. I don't know, of course, how a female reader might perceive this immortal man of yours.

'As for the ending, I was utterly floored -- not so much by the unexpected (but entirely in character) shocking cannibalism, but by your boldness in conceiving such a thing. We are, most of us, so unsettled by the very idea of death that we can do little more than make nervous black-humor jokes about it (I just heard my first Reverend Jim Jones joke today -- something about using his picture in Kool-Ade ads). Cannibalism as a rational alternative seems logical in the context of the story, but is such a powerful idea that it left me entirely stunned -- I had to read the last page again to make sure I'd really seen that.'

*((You have a point about place names, but for reader orientation I decided to stick with what is.*

*((I suspect that the manuscript was rejected out of hand by one publisher because the first reader was a young liberated female person who saw untrammeled sexism and etc. on every page. The mss was sent to the editor of the sf line, but it didn't get to him. Maybe, now that he's moved to another publisher, it will have a fair reception. I think ONE IMMORTAL MAN is a highly commercial novel, but finding the right publisher is a matter of time. So it goes.))*

## # LETTER FROM JEFF JOHNSTON

August, 1978

'I wanted to finally take the time to write and give you my com-

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 56

# THE VIVISECTOR

## *A Column By Darrell Schweitzer*

THE FIVE JARS
By M.R. James
Arno, 1976, 172 pp., $10.00

This is M.R. James' only novel, published originally as a juvenile in 1922. Like most fantasies of this sort, it is quite readable by adults, and, with declining literacy in our schools what it is, probably of more interest to the James collector than the children's librarian.

How do we define a juvenile in any case? I would use two criteria: vocabulary and emotional tone. THE FIVE JARS is certainly not written in simplistic prose -- it is clear, precise, very sedate but not kiddified -- but the content does strike me as a bit cute and watered down. There is a certain lack of intensity, as if James were afraid that if he went too far he'd scare his readers overmuch. (Remember, he was one of the masters of the ghost story.) Menaces aren't that menacing, and tend to be overcome easily.

The plot concerns a gentleman of leisure who is led by a remarkably articulate babbling brook, and later a pool, to unearth a box containing five jars of magic potions, which enable him to see and converse with supernatural creatures, shrink to tiny size, etc. He rapidly befriends a community of hitherto invisible little people living on his lawn, and with their help wards off the attempts of various evil beings to steal the jars. The problem is that very little is explained: where the jars came from and why the brook babbled just then, why the little people must scamper away when a bell rings at a certain hour, who and what the adversaries are and why they didn't go after the jars when they were buried and why the "bat ball" brought on at the end may be repelled with ordinary water. Things tend to just happen.

On the positive side, James is frequently quite inventive and some of his images are startling. I don't think you'll forget the strange old woman hanging from the clothesline and flapping merrily in the wind or the little people who fail to "do their jobs" and slowly shrink into nothingness.

An interesting book, but not a great one.

MILLENNIAL WOMEN
Ed. Virginia Kidd
Delacorte Press, 1978, 305 pp., $8.95

Of course the major attraction of this book is the new Ursula Le Guin Novel it contains, THE EYE OF THE HERON, which takes up 178 pages, over half the text. In one sense, MILLENNIAL WOMEN is simply a new Le Guin novel with frills attached. As an anthology it is partially a marketing gimmick (Gosh! Women are writing science fiction! As if they haven't been since Mary Shelley. Remember the back cover blurb on THE SIGN OF THE LABRYS?) and partially a collection of stories on the theme of women's roles in various future societies.

THE EYE OF THE HERON is medium-range Le Guin. It doesn't preach shrilly like THE WORD FOR WORLD IS FOREST, but on the other hand, it isn't as complex as THE DISPOSSESSED, or as powerful as THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS. Like THE DISPOSSESSED, it is a detailed examination of an imaginary society and it works as a novel rather than a tract. This is no small feat in itself, something which has eluded generations of utopian writers, not to mention quite a few contributors to the early science fiction magazines. Unlike THE DISPOSSESSED, this one has an interplanetary locale which really convinces. We don't have to swallow a society which, although taken from the same biological stock as Earth people, evolved entirely on its own, yet somehow became amazingly similar to 20th Century Earth, complete with three superpowers, one of which is authoritarian and run by a "presidium". HERON is set on an extra-solar planet colonized by convicts from Earth, plus a large batch of The People of Peace, ideological pacifists whom the Earth authorities found a nuisance. The environment is very Earth-like, but the local flora and fauna are not merely familiar species with new names. Le Guin shows more imagination than most writers in this regard, and thus creates a stronger sense of a real place than is usually found in contemporary SF.

The novel is quite satisfying within its limits. We could wish that the characters were more developed, but at least what we are given rings true. The story is about: 1) a pacifist society facing a serious external threat 2) a woman breaking free of restrictive traditional roles (i.e. girls obey their fathers, then marry who they're told to and obey their husbands) and 3) a genuinely talented leader coming to grips with the temptations of power. The problem arises when the folk of the City (descendants of the convicts, and self-appointed government) decide to enforce their authority on the Town (pacifists) with the ultimate intent of reducing the population to serfdom. Passive resistance ensues, then a small amount of violence, which is the crux of the whole matter. You'll recall what happened to the society of pacifists in Sprague de Camp's THE TRITONIAN RING when faced to the equivalent of Atilla the Hun. Slaughtered to the last individual. I think Le Guin (and her characters) would be honest enough to admit that against completely unrestrained violence, passive resistance, non-violence, protest, etc. are useless. You can only die free. Ghandi, after all, was well aware that his techniques wouldn't work against the Japanese, and all the while Hitler, in his various rantings, just could not understand why the British did not be sensible and shoot Ghandi. Fortunately for Le Guin's pacifists, the City people are basically a decent lot, so things remain on a level where such things work. Both sides are sufficiently shocked by

the bloodshed that they come to terms. Some of the Town people who find this an unacceptable compromise of their ideals slip out into the wilderness to found their own settlement. Among them is one Luz Falco, the daughter of the City's boss, who has left her own people for the freedom of the Town, and won't settle for second best. After quite a bit of shifting around, the focus of the narrative settles on her, so that her transformation is seen from the inside, step by step, as personal growth. The other major characters, her father, and Lev, a young leader of the pacifists, are not as well developed.

Joan D. Vinge's novelet, PHOENIX IN THE ASHES is also about a woman caught in a repressive society, that of isolated Mexican peasants a good while after everything north of the border has been blasted into a plain of glass via nuclear war. Civilization is centered in Brazil and a Brazilian prospector (after the fossil fuels and recoverable metals) barely survives a helicopter crash in a remote village. The locals won't aid him at all, convinced that he is a sorcerer, struck down by God, However, he finds himself living with Amanda, who is an outcast for having defied her father and refused to marry the man he chose. (Whereupon he disowned her, withdrawing her dowry, making marriage impossible.) The story is about how the two of them become reconciled with such conditions, and each other. In the hands of an inept writer, this might be quite cornball, but Joan Vinge is not inept. Like Le Guin she gives a very convincing sense of place. Amanda and her society are so real on the level of day-to-day life that the story works. One might argue, though, that the prospector's amnesia is either an unnecessary contrivance, or something which needs to be explored in more detail. When he finds out who he is and what will happen if the area is opened to development (i.e. exploitation of the local wetbacks), he reamins where he is, with Amanda, never returning to civilization. What were the thoughts and emotions that went into his decision?

None of the short stories are as distinguished. Elizabeth Lynn's "Jubilee's Story" is probably the most interesting, but it reads like a fragment of a longer work. Without some development of background and preparation for what actually goes on in the story, things are very sketchy indeed, and none of the characters more than one-dimensional personifications of attitudes. (i.e. strong woman, weak woman, good man, evil man, occasionally strong but usually apathetic man.) Diana Paxson's "The Song of N'Sardi-El" is a competent story of alien contact and misunderstanding which I didn't find very memorable. While we're talking about memorable... there's "Mab Gallen Recalled" by Cherry Wilder. I should have taken notes about it. Here I am writing this review two days after reading the thing, and I can recall just about nothing of the content. Let's see, a quick page-through reminds me that it had something to do with an emergency situation on a spaceship and a woman's demanding to be able to decide if she can risk her life for someone else. There was also a woman priest involved. The pilot was black. It seems to be more an exercise in showing the right people in important roles than a story. I understand Ms. Wilder's first novel, THE LUCK OF BRIN'S FIVE, is quite good. If so, this is hardly a proper sample of her work. Finally, Cynthia Felice's "No One Said Forever" is about a woman who has to choose between her marriage and her career, since she's being transferred where her husband can't go. One of my best friends is in that situation right now, and for a year or so will live 1000 miles away from his wife. You guessed it, the story isn't really science fiction, and setting it in a skimpily developed future doesn't make it so.

By all means get this book for the Le Guin and Vinge items which make up three quarters of it. This is the edition to get too, despite the horrendously bad dustjacket (by one Enrich, who either belongs in ANOMALIES & CURIOSITIES OF MEDICINE or else has no powers of observation in matters anatomical), because unlike most contemporary hardcovers, it's more than a paperback between boards. Delacorte may be one of the last publishers in the country to use good paper, sewn signatures and cloth bindings. Which means the book won't fall apart after one or two readings.

●

FANTASMS: A JACK VANCE BIBLIOGRAPHY
By Daniel J.H. Levack & Tim Underwood
Underwood-Miller (239 N 4th Street, (Columbia, PA 17512)
Hardcover $10.95, paper $6.95

Just what the Vance completist always wanted. This is a thoroughly researched, coherently organized bibliography, which tells you where everything appeared, what got incorporated into what, and how many editions there were. All English language appearances, and some translations are listed. The book is well printed and bound, and illustrated with numerous reproductions of Vance covers. Without intending to sound too cryptic, the verdict is: If this is just what you need, this is just what you need.

●

WHO'S WHO IN SCIENCE FICTION
By Brian Ash
Taplinger, paper, 1978, 220 pp.
$4.95

An alphabetically arranged, semi-biographical encyclopedia of the field. The criterion for judging such a work is accuracy, and I'm pleased to say I don't find gross and wholesale errors, so this book will certainly be of some value to researchers. Mr. Ash's knowledge of the field is broad, as might be expected, if a little superficial.

He is more up on what is going on now than what was going on a while back. Thus he tells you about current revisionist evaluations of Hugo Gernsback, but he is dead wrong when he comes to the meaning and origin of the term "space opera". "Akin to 'soap opera' if it were taking place on Earth", says he, which will come as a bit of a shock to millions of STAR WARS trekkies. (By the way, Tucker coined it.)

More seriously, often a good deal of bias shows through. It is all right not to like H.P. Lovecraft, Mr. Ash, but calling "Herbert West: Reanimator" one of his "better SF stories" is simply preposterous, especially when "The Shadow out of Time" is not mentioned! Also, considering Lovecraft's international reputation, I would say HPL's own work is of more lasting importance than his influence on Kuttner, Bloch, etc. Those people only became important when they stopped writing in the style of Lovecraft.

There are a few curious omissions and distortions. A. Merritt is said to have been a "regular contributor" to WEIRD TALES, when in fact he only appeared there once, when ARGOSY rejected "The Woman of the Wood". James White's THE WATCH BELOW may not be accurately summed up as "humans engage in underwater conflict with aquatic aliens". Anything about Edgar Pangborn which fails to mention DAVY is, to say the least, inadequate. And since the book is up to date enough to include a mention of Pangborn's death in 1976, I think it would have been a good idea to remove the claim that LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS was published that year. As all fans know, it will be published Real Soon Now. There are also numerous errors in the magazine listings. Ted White never edited FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. This magazine is not the same as FANTASTIC, and actually co-existed with it for a while. Sam Merwin did not edit BEYOND. White was an assistant at F&SF, never the editor. Mary Gnaedinger was editor of FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES. Daniel Keyes was an associate editor of MARVEL. R.O. Erisman was in charge.

An acceptable reference work, but hardly definitive.

●

WHO'S WHO IN HORROR & FANTASY FICTION
By Mike Ashley
Taplinger, 1978, 240 pp. $10.95

Far more detailed than the preceding, this one should become the standard reference work in its field There is a vast amount of information here about many pre-modern writers, plus virtually all the moderns. The only omission I noted was Jane Rice. Not mentioned. Perhaps this is unfair, because I've recently developed an interest in her work, but I was disappointed to find nothing about her here when far more obscure people have full entries. (All I know about Ms. Rice is that she was a regular contributor to UNKNOWN, and also appeared in F&SF three times. A superb stylist, sometimes limited in idea content, she is slightly remembered for "Idol of the Flies" and "The Refugee".)

The only outright error I found was the statement that Charles Williams' WITCHCRAFT is a "thriller". Actually, it's non-fiction, about sorcery through the ages, written from Christian viewpoint. I find it a bit odd that Cabell's SMIRE is called a "straight weird novel" and that we're not told it's the third volume of a trilogy, THE NIGHTMARE HAS TRIPLETS. (Actually it's a dream novel, "an attempt to extend the naturalism of Lewis Carrol", the author claimed.) Tolkein fans might flinch at the recommendation of Lin Carter's A LOOK BEHIND THE LORD OF THE RINGS.

However, this is overall a very satisfactory effort. Ashley (unlike Ash) is even detailed and accurate on the subject of magazines, and he is even aware of some of the major semi-professional ones, which are more important in this field than they are in science fiction. (One point: FANTASY & TERROR is no longer with us.)

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# *OTHER VOICES,* ***OTHER VOICES,*** OTHER VOICES, **OTHER**

THE SWORD SMITH
By Eleanor Arnason
Condor, 1978

Reviewed by Orson Scott Card

The book is impossible. Sorcery is referred to, as are gods, but except for dragons' doors and dragons' gardens (and dragons, for that matter) there's nothing in the book that couldn't come out of third century China. Everything is desupernaturalized. There's no attempt at high-flown language; dragons do not breathe fire and are dying out; trolls are Homo erectus and are dying out; and the hero isn't on a marvelous quest, he's just trying to quit his job and his boss won't accept his resignation.

The book is not only out-of-genre, it's even pointless, which is the kiss of death as far as I'm (usually) concerned. The hero, Limper, doesn't particularly know where he's going -- he's just going away. The dragon, Nargri, thinks Limper's a bit dumb (except he's a good smith) but occasionally she bites people when it will help -- she's a baby, and she's just along for the ride. And no two incidents in the book are connected. Limper just keeps getting captured either by people who want to take him back to his boss, the King of Eshgorin, or by people who want to kill him and perform assorted rude acts on his corpse.

So why did I keep reading with so much interest?

I guess it's partly because Arnason writes so cleanly. There's something about somebody who can tell a story interestingly without any stylistic frufra that I have to admire. I can only admire -- I haven't yet learned how to imitate it. And though her characters are relentlessly witty, the wit is genuine enough, not forced. I got more than a few pleasant chuckles.

Arnason also seems to throw away story elements that could have been epic, had she wanted to treat them that way. When Enrin, a noble-hearted hero from Eshgorin, dies in the snow from the dragons' crossbow bolt, I realized that I had just read a story of immense mythic power. Yet in this book it's almost a common event -- regrettable, but certainly something one doesn't get too excited about.

Limper just goes on, you see, and by the end it's clear that's all he ever plans to do. And to my surprise, that's enough. He's an exceptionally good swordsmith, a fair swordfighter, and one hell of a bad planner, but he muddles through, and by the end I was glad he intended to go on muddling. His life, and the book, were pointless and got nowhere, but the getting there made me like him, perhaps because of his very commonness. He doesn't stand head and shoulders above other men. He stands even with most and lower than some (as I do); he does some things well and falls flat on his face the rest of the time (as I do); he keeps sleeping with the wrong women and not sleeping with the right ones (I beg off the personal analogy here); he is everyman smack-dab in the middle of a heroic fantasy milieu. Conan could come charging over the hill with gore dripping from his sword, and Limper would just melt into the underbrush and mutter about how glad he is not to have to tangle with a monster like that.

THE SWORD SMITH doesn't have the epic grandeur or the nobility of purpose of LOTR. It doesn't have the depth of detail and the intriguing characterization of Gormenghast. It doesn't have the magic of Earthsea or Hed. It doesn't even have the sheer excitement of Conan.

But despite all the doesn'ts, it does have one thing: my recommendation. I liked it. I liked it very much. And if you can figure out why, explain it to me.

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*Reviews in hand for next issue: IVAN EFREMOV'S THEORY OF SOVIET SCIENCE FICTION, NIGHT SHIFT, THE BEST OF JACK WILLIAMSON, THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE, THE AMERICAN MONOMYTH, THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE, GORDON R. DICKSON'S SF BEST, SIGHT OF PROTEUS, THE DRAGON BOOK and more.*

THE BOOK OF ELLISON
Edited by Andrew Porter
Algol Press, $5.95 paper, $15.00 hardcover

Reviewed by Mark Cofta

For those who jump, wiggle, giggle insanely, wag tongue, roll eyes and otherwise react: Algol Press has released a book by Harlan Ellison. Well, by and about, which is almost as good.

THE BOOK OF ELLISON is not sensational, but is insightful and a noble tribute to a fine author. The first part of the book -- about a third -- is a salute to Ellison, a collection of reminiscences that, thankfully, don't drag us through drooling drivel. By Isaac Asimov, Lee Hoffman, Ted White, Robert Silverberg and David Gerrold, all written from the heart with no fake pats-on-the-back.

An extra bonus in this section is Joseph Patrouch's perceptive evaluation of Harlan's story technique, "Harlan Ellison and the Formula Story", one of the most intelligent and coherent pieces of criticism I've read in a long time. Ellison closes this "Book About Ellison" section with a dry biographical statement that, though dated, answers curiosity and lays out the facts well.

"The Book By Ellison" is a series of little-known essays on SF from diverse and obscure sources, a gold mine of Ellison non-fiction nearly impossible to find elsewhere. I can't single out the most interesting or best piece; all lend insight into Ellison and are invigorating reading. "The Whore With a Heart of Iron Pyrites, or Where Does One Go to Find a Maggie?" shines a bit more than the rest; it's a companion to "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes", written for Robin Scott Wilson's THOSE WHO CAN and an interesting look at Harlan the writer.

Stuck discretely at the end of the book are two short stories from 1955 which clearly show the later, more mature Ellison style peeking through: "Hardcover" and "A Walk Around the Block". Also included is a checklist of his non-fiction by Leslie Kay Swigart, a companion to her fiction checklist in the Ellison issue of F&SF (7/77).

The checklist shows how much most of us will probably never be able to locate, but Andrew Porter has given us a sample and a touching, revealing look at a very special man.

THE FAR CALL
By Gordon R. Dickson
Quantum SF, New York: Dial Press/ James Wade, 1978, 414 pp.

Reviewed by Sandra Miesel

THE FAR CALL is Dickson's most ambitious and most satisfying single novel to date. (If you read a serial of the same title in ANALOG a few years back, forget it. This version is roughly three times as long and totally rewritten.) Here Dickson uses the first manned expedition to Mars as his stage for a set of interlaced dramas about human development. He asks: "Who will heed the far call to progress? Who can even hear it?" His answer is that dreamers are wise enough to listen and move forward but clever people are too busy protecting their power to notice what is happening.

Dickson weaves a host of multiple viewpoints together with smooth, ungimmicked touch and deploys a large cast of believable characters ranging from the President of the United States to petty criminals. Starring roles go to two couples: the U.S. Undersecretary for Space and his career journalist girl friend (man the thinker) and the U.S. marsnaut and his homemaking wife (man the doer). Members of each pair complement both their partners and the members of the other pair. The plot focuses on their tragedies, triumphs and mutual adjustments which in turn affect the entwined lives of the supporting players.

This novel marks a significant advance in Dickson's handling of female characters. They are stronger and more sympathetic here than ever before in his fiction. (Feminists will cheer at the sight of a downtrodden barmaid defending her dignity with a paring knife.) Not only do the women act as conservators to play off against the progressivism of the men, by the end of the story they have integrated both attitudes within themselves. Their relationships with men are also marked with more warmth and humor than formerly -- no previous Dickson hero proposed marriage while up to his elbows in soapsuds from washing dishes.

THE FAR CALL shows a complete panorama of people touched by space exploration: marsnauts, engineers, ground personnel, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, security guards and media representatives as well as the locals who serve them all. The Kennedy Space Center atmosphere is totally authentic although one might quibble that the surrounding towns do not look sleazy enough to match reality. The author's many trips to the Cape as a journalist and the thoroughness of his research make his book glow with conviction. The emotional and technical problems of the space program have never been more vividly presented than here.

Finally, a positive, optimistic novel is...well...a novelty these days. There is something gratifying -- besides novel -- about watching people react decently under stress, suffer for a worthwhile cause, and pair off happily with the right lovers. THE FAR CALL offers no supermen, no flashy daring-do, no mystical pyrotechnics -- just sheer excellence.

**********

THE RUNESTAFF
By Michael Moorcock
Daw, Sept, 1977, 158 pp. $1.25

Reviewed by L. Craig Rickman

Grim. Downbeat. Depressing.

I've heard those three adjectives used in reviews of Michael Moorcock's fiction so many times that it is no longer necessary to read the review; they all tend to say much the same thing. Not only that, but the use of those three words often shapes the character of the review itself.

Daw has, over the past couple of years, been reissuing Moorcock's old Lancer titles -- in particular the chronicles of Elric and Hawkmoon. I'm not sure how they've been selling, but I know of few fantasy buffs who've not added the Daw editions to their library.

THE RUNESTAFF is the concluding volume in the series, colorfully entitled, THE HIGH HISTORY OF THE RUNESTAFF. Unfortunately, the book does not quite live up to the title. It is not really very colorful, nor is the climax quite what one comes to expect from Michael Moorcock. Not that it's a bad book -- or even a mediocre one. It's simply not Moorcock at his best. Lupoff described many of Burrough's insignificant, if entertaining works as "Potboilers", and I think that adjective sums this one up pretty well.

The book concerns the petty intrigues of the court of Granbretan, and how Hawkmoon, Count Brass and the other good guys use these inner turmoils to again return the world to the sanity that the beast-masked warriors of the Dark Empire had ousted. It all comes out a little too pat, and the features of the series (especially the Runestaff) that are the most intriguing in the beginning, come off as the most boring. I was definitely dissatisfied with this volume, and, although the other three books were better, it rather nipped my growing fondness for the series.

If you like Moorcock, and like fantasy-adventure read this one and the entire series. Otherwise, forget it.

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THE BICENTENNIAL MAN AND OTHER STORIES
By Isaac Asimov
Fawcett Crest, $1.75

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

Isaac Asimov's previous collection, BUY JUPITER!, was largely a selection of Asimovian trivia, outrageous puns and shaggy dog stories. THE BICENTENNIAL MAN, however, shows him to be once more the master of science fiction that has written the Foundation trilogy and "Nightfall". This collection has a Hugo winner, a Hugo nominee, and a story that was included in one of Donald Wollenheim's YEAR'S BEST anthologies.

Four of the stories are of his famed positronic robot series. One of these, "Feminine Intuition", even has Asimov's favorite character, Susan Calvin. The others are: "That Thou Art Mindful of Him", which was a Hugo nominee, and is about the final solution to the robot problem; "The Tercentenary Incident" is similar to his other positronic robot story "Evidence" in that both deal with suspicions that an important public figure is in fact a robot; and finally, "The Bicentennial Man", which won the Hugo award in 1977 as best novelette. It is among the best things Asimov has ever written, being a tale of freedom and humanity as told through the eyes of a robot who wanted to be free and to become human. It is a touching story, definitely a Hugo winner.

Another pair of excellent stories are the two longest in the

book: "Waterclap" and "Stranger in Paradise". The former was originally written to be the basis of a movie, but was turned down. It describes how a fanatical supporter of a lunar colony tries to destroy a deep-sea colony which he feels is taking money which could be used on the lunar one. The second story concerns two brothers who must work together to develop a robot which will be able to explore Mercury, although Earth is going through a period when brothers born of the same mother and father are regarded as shameful. Another excellent story is "The Winnowing", which is about a biochemist who is forced to turn over virus-like material to government officials who plan to use it to kill off 70% of the human race so the remainder won't face famine. There are excellent reasonings on both sides of the question, and the ending is a shocker.

Besides his appearances in various science fiction magazines, Asimov has also had stories in several places where you wouldn't expect to see a science fiction story. Some of these are included in this collection. They are: "The Life and Times of Multivac", which appeared in THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE; "Marching In", which was in HIGH FIDELITY; and "Old Fashioned" which was printed in BELL TELEPHONE MAGAZINE.

Rounding out the collection are two small items. "Birth of a Notion" was written for AMAZING STORIES' 50th Anniversary, and describes how a time-traveller managed to get Hugo Gernsback not to call his magazine SCIENTIFICTION. The other item is "The Prime of Life", a poem which seeks to disprove for all time that Isaac Asimov is over a hundred, several people, or a science fiction-writing computer.

Besides the excellent stories, there are Asmimov's notes to each story, telling how they came to be written, and interesting facts about them. This running dialogue has come to be a trademark in Asimov's collections, and some people enjoy them as much as the stories themselves. This collection is not to be missed by anyone who enjoys science fiction, or who just likes good storytelling.

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DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW
By Jack L. Chalker
Ballantine/Del Rey Books, $1.75

Reviewed by Larry W. Mitchell

Mankind has been bumping up against aliens forever in the pages of SF, and they do so again in DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW. Humankind's Combine is in a stalemated war with the Machist culture until the enemy takes a seemingly worthless human world called Ondine. As in the past, no one knows what the Machists look like or the fate of the people on Machist-occupied worlds.

A single man goes to Ondine to unravel the enemy's essence, and to organize resistance to them. A man in essence only, Daniel is a human nervous system/computer interface encapsulated in a small spaceship. He can control 22 robotic "selves" called symbs, simultaneously. Much of the story revolves around his inner agonies of being no longer human, but remembering vividly that he was.

Machists capture most of Ondine's population, but a small number escape into the wilderness. They become Daniel's ragged guerrilla band, and the least interesting part of the story.

It was with increasing trepidation, however, that I read what happens to the majority of the population. First, the cities empty out into the countryside -- a la Cambodia. With depressing success, Chalker then develops the complete conversion of the human culture to something alien. It's detailed and it sounds like it just might work.

There are plenty of mystery elements in DANCERS that make it a tight story throughout. You'll probably buy the book because of the Michael Herring cover. It literally glows on the book racks.

By the way, all the chapter headings are musical terms. I could not find any connection between the headings and the story line, but there seems to be a correspondence between the musical definition and the style or pace of the chapter's action. "Music of the Spheres", anyone?

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NIGHT WINDS
By Karl Edward Wagner
Warner Books, $1.95

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

Karl Edward Wagner has won an enviable esteem in the sword and sorcery genre in recent years. Although he has only written five books so far concerning his character Kane, he has achieved such a following that he has been invited to write novels with Robert E. Howard's characters Bran Mak Morn and Conan for Zebra and Bantam, respectively.

NIGHT WINDS is Wagner's second collection of Kane short fiction, the now out-of-print DEATH ANGEL'S SHADOW being the first. In these stories, Wagner continues the saga of his deathless, doomed swordsman, Kane, who is patterned after the Biblical Cain. Kane slew his brother as an act of rebellion against the mad god which created mankind as a plaything, and was punished for his acts by being cursed with a life which would last until he was slain by the same violence he brought into the world, and his eyes gleam with the mad fires of a born killer, the Mark of Kane. He roams in a world of barbaric kingdoms and ancient magic and races. Throughout his ages-long life, he has been a bandit, a king, a wizard, an assassin, and a leader of armies.

"Undertow" is the first story in the book, and is reprinted from the award-winning horror magazine WHISPERS. In the story, Kane is a wizard in the city of Carsultyal, greatest of mankind's cities in the dawn of civilization. Kane holds on to the girl Dessylyn who once loved him by use of necromancy, but he must contend with others who also love Dessylyn. The story ends with Dessylyn finally escaping with one of her lovers, and the strange twist of fate which follows.

"Two Suns Setting" takes place some years later, after the city of Carsultyal has fallen because of Kane's delvings into magic. Kane comes across one of the race of giants which ruled much of earth before the coming of man. Together, they seek to recover the crown belonging to the greatest of the ancient giant kings.

"The Dark Muse" once again has Kane dabbling in the black arts. He is persuaded by a poet friend, Opyros, to invoke a spell which will allow Opyros to journey briefly into the realms of dream, guided by the Dark Muse, in search of the

ultimate inspiration for his poetry. Despite difficulties due to a wizard's apprentice who tries to recover an occult statuette from Kane which is used in the invokation, Kane sends Opyros into the realms of dream, but the inspiration yields a most unusual poem.

"Raven's Eyrie" takes place when Kane is once more a bandit chieftain. He and the survivors of his band are fleeing from an ambush, and they take shelter in an inn which is run by a woman who was raped by Kane seven years before. Unknown to Kane, the woman has made a pact with the Demon Lord to sacrifice the child born from Kane's rape in return for the Demon Lord hunting down Kane with a hound from hell. The story moves in an eerie and suspenseful fashion to a truly frightening ending.

"Lynortis Reprise" is a melancholy tale of a search through a war-ruined city by Kane and the king whose army destroyed the city. The maimed survivors of both armies remain to defend the city, since they were scorned by their families and friends from the outside world. Kane aids the daughter of the last princess of the city, who everyone believes knows where the hidden room of gold is located.

The final story in the volume is "Sing a Last Song of Valdese". Kane plays only a minor part in the story, and his identity is only revealed near the end. The story tells of the unfolding of a dread curse by a sorcerer whose love was raped and slain many years before against those who killed her and tortured him and left him for dead.

Karl Edward Wagner is an acknowledged leader in the field of fantasy. "Two Suns Setting" was a nominee for the 1976 World Fantasy Awards, and was reprinted in YEAR'S BEST FANTASY #3, edited by Lin Carter. "Sing a Last Song of Valdese" and "Undertow" have been reprinted in YEAR'S BEST HORROR #5 and #6, respectively. It is likely that more of Wagner's material will be chosen for Year's Best anthologies and award nominations in the years to come. NIGHT WINDS is a volume that no lover of sword and sorcery, horror, or just good story-telling ought to miss. Adding to an excellent package is a lovely Frank Frazetta cover.

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DEATHBEAST
By David Gerrold
Popular Library, 255 pp. $1.75

Reviewed by Paul McGuire III

Since I have been a reader of SF ever since I could read, I would have become aware of David Gerrold even if he had not started by writing two non-fiction books for STAR TREK fans. I have read everything he has written since then because I found that even at his worst David is competent enough to be entertaining on some level, and at his best he is superb.

For over a year David has been writing a column in STARLOG, a magazine about films and TV shows related to SF&F, horror and Sci-fi. In the issue that came out a month before DEATHBEAST he used his column to publish the first chapter of the book, hoping to increase sales by once again getting non-SF readers to buy. Hope he makes lots of money. Hope many of them become fans and other authors benefit too. But, to get back to DEATHBEAST, is it worth the money and time of people who have read an SF novel or two before this one?

How many fictional folks have hunted dinosaurs since SF became a genre? Well, add another batch. There are nine characters. Ethab -- super determined hunter. Leader of the group. More like Clint Eastwood or Charles Bronson than Richard Boone. Karlen -- Ethab's good right arm, and a poor man's version of him. Nusa -- Ethab's former lover. Raquel or Farrah would play her part. Loevil and Megan -- man and wife, which must be like they don't like each other much. Professional time guides. "Great white hunters" with gadgets. Dorik -- A dork. Dumpy. Goofy. Bumbling. In fact, the Seven Dwarfs in one body. Tril and Eese -- very much in love. Deathbeast -- nine tons of Tyrannosaurus Rex. SUPER-JAWS!!! (Well, why not? If a measly little shark can turn printer's ink into gold -- well, are SF fans <u>really</u> any smarter than those little fish in the mainstream?)

DEATHBEAST is blood and guts adventure of the "get to know them as you watch them die" type. Good suspense, lots of grisly action, stereotype characters presented as if they were marvelously complex, and a high voltage finish. Yeah, JAWS: ONE MILLION YEARS B.C., but as I said, Gerrold knows all the tricks of the trade. He is always entertaining.

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THE INSTITUTE
By Robert Petyo
Manor Books, 1978, 219 pp., $1.50

Reviewed by Dean R. Lambe

The only function served by THE INSTITUTE is as wrapper for the cigarette ad in the middle: Close Cover Before Striking! If a plot exists, it concerns Alex Commoner, a dull, young bank teller who works in a future Washington, DC. Alex suffers unrequited love for Ann Marie, wife of Alex's best friend, Richard Shatz. But Richard has been kidnapped by the dictatorial Institute for Scientific and Technological Advancement, because the Institute's staff must understand everything -- including why Richard has no shadow. Alex, Ann Marie, and a host of vacuous people, aren't bothered by Richard's transparency to sunlight, and plot to spring their friend. They also want to save the world from the evil scientists who have merely solved all the world's problems.

The astute might wonder why Alex worries about finding a parking space for his "solar car" when the Institute has developed antigravity. Or what references to teen-aged Alex's ability to teleport have to do with anything? And why does 24-year-old Alex have flashbacks to memories of Seattle that would be appropriate to a future 60-year-old? Most won't bother to get that far -- THE INSTITUTE is not so much a novel as it is an exercise in collective illiteracy.

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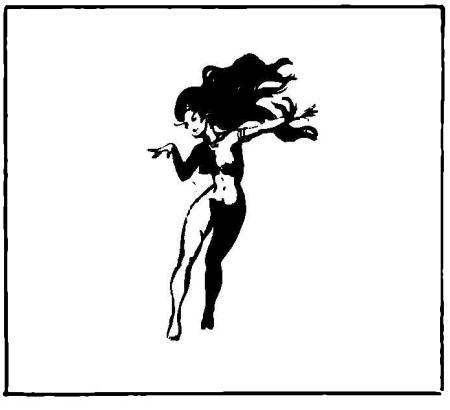
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA
By Chelsea Quinn Yarbro
St. Martin's, 1978

Reviewed by F. Paul Wilson

This one's a shocker, a mutant dressed in a coat of many colors. It's by a rising young author who has already made a bit of a name for herself. It's an alternate selection of the Literary Guild and the Science Fiction Book Club. Yet the only place I've ever seen it mentioned is in the club circulars.

The reason is obvious upon reading the book: Nobody at St. Martin's knew what to do with the damn thing. I can picture the marketing and publicity people agonizing over



HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA... "Let's market it as a gothic"... "No, no! It will offend gothic readers!"... "Well, a historical, then. Historicals are big now"... "But historicals don't have vampires running around. I mean, real vampires!" "Then sell it as a horror story!" "But it's really a love story"... "Arrrgggh!"

So they dumped it on the market and somehow it found its way into two book clubs. And yes, the novel is all of those things mentioned above. But not in a calculating way. I believe Yarbro had a story to tell and she told it as it had to be told, unmindful of the marketing people. HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA may be a historical/gothic/horror/love story, but not because the author wanted to try to cash in on multiple markets. All the elements fit.

Briefly, the plot revolves around Madelaine de Montalia, a young country cousin who comes to Paris to live with her aunt and uncle and be introduced into Parisian society. She catches the eye of all the heterosexual men about, especially two: the mysterious le Comte de Saint-Germain, and the fearsome le Baron Clotaire de Saint Sebastien who is whispered to belong to a Satanist cult. Saint Sebastien wants Madelaine for the next rites -- only Madelaine. Why he is so specific is part of the mystery. Madelaine is a feisty young woman, but no match for Saint Sebastien and his followers. Only the black-clad Saint Germaine, who is drawn to her unique mixture of innocence and audacity, stands between the evil Saint Sebastien and his desire.

Sounds tired? Sounds thin? Wait...Saint Germaine is a vampire.

Aha!

That's all I'll say about the plot...I tried to diagram it out and got a headache. The behind-the-scenes machinations are enthralling. The characters are real and believable, with the possible exception of Saint Sebastien. There are villains and there are villains, but this guy is a real sicko. Yarbro did some fancy footwork to turn her vampire hero into a sympathetic character, but apparently she felt she had to scrape the floor of a charnal house to give him a suitably evil foe.

The setting is lovingly rendered. Yarbro is either a student of mid-Eighteenth Century Parisian high society, or she's a great faker. Either way, she made me believe. And then there are the letters -- chapters are opened and/or closed with letters from one character to another. They not only enhance the ambiance by being perfectly couched in the style of the times, but fill in background with a minimum of ado.

All in all, a tight, well-crafted novel. I have only one gripe. The last third of the book is a prolonged excursion into the blackest depths of human depravity. (I used to write cover copy, folks). The climax is something that might have appeared in an old shudder pulp with all the stops pulled out. Not at all for the squeamish. I'm as hard as hell to rattle, but I was frankly quite shaken by the time I finished the book. Who'd have thought that gentle woman with the short red hair I met at the 1976 SFWA editor-author reception had this in her.

Get a copy. Read it. The SF Book Club edition is about half the price of the Literary Guild edition which is almost half the price of the trade edition.

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA. A nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live there.

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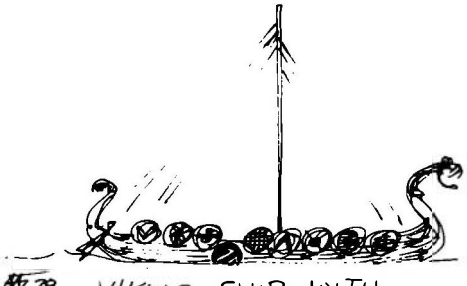


IRSUD
By Jo Clayton
Daw Books, 1978, $1.75

Reviewed by Dean R. Lambe

In the third novel of the "Diadem" series, Clayton continues the "Dumarest"-like quest of the young barbarian Aleytys, and her search for both her mother's world, and her own lately-kidnapped child. On Irsud, Aleytys is sold into slavery and is made parasitic host for the egg of the dead Nayid queen. Aleytys has a year of life before the genetic time-bomb will destroy her in giving birth to the new-old queen of this insectoid-reptilian race. The heroine's plans for escape are thwarted by the Nayid power struggles of the ruling Kipu, and complicated by Aleytys's love for a nayid male (bug-eyes, and all), and the plight of the enslaved humanoids, the hiiri. Were a lack of the adventure and pace characteristic of the first two "Diadem" novels the only fault of IRSUD, Clayton's fame would continue to grow. But IRSUD is so seriously flawed, that she would do well to discontinue the series.

Like Stableford's Star-pilot Grainger, and Clement's NEEDLE, Aleytys carries a symbiotic "Rider" in her head -- a gift of the ancient Diadem she picked up in the first book. In IRSUD, this "Rider" is revealed to be three distinct personalities: a scholar, a poet and a warrior. The skills of all three "Riders", plus the time-stopping gift of the Diadem, are available to Aleytys, as are her own extensive paranormal powers. Flaw #1, of course, is the "Stupid Superman" syndrome. Those wonderful powers and skills seem to be inconveniently forgotten in a pinch. And I -- and Women's Lib -- would be a lot happier if this wonder woman didn't lapse into a "fit of giggles" at crucial times.

A second flaw involves a persistent space/time dislocation of metaphor (anachronism and anthropomorphism won't do, SF needs a special term). If there are "mimosoid" plants on Irsud, why also bamboo? And if Aleyty's love bug is pictured with eyes "the size of teacups", why is tea (and cups) introduced to the planet for the first time by traders who arrive at the end?

The most serious flaw, however, concerns Clayton's creation of alien languages -- she didn't create them, and they're not alien. The small, three-fingered hiiri speak Finnish! Granted, others (e.g., Emil Pataja and Poul Anderson) have used the language and legends of Finland, and the De Camps's HANDBOOK even recommends use of a human tongue as a model. But those writers have played fair, have provided a logical basis for the language used. Clayton has cheated, and done so poorly. Even one as little familiar with the language of his forefathers as I must balk at the hiiri slave-girl's statement that "hutikuu" is a "month in the fall", when Finnish Huhtikuu means April! And, it's doubly ironic that Clayton has chosen one of the most non-sexist languages of man for her extremely male chauvinistic hiiri (but then, a hiisi is a demon).

Anyone care to lei odds that Clayton has Old Hawaiian in mind for "le-any" Aleytys to encounter next?

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THE ONLY LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM HISTORY IS THAN MANKIND DOES NOT LEARN FROM HISTORY.

FALSE DAWN
By Chelsea Quinn Yarbro
Doubleday, 1978, 208 pp., $7.95
Cover art by Gary Friedman

Reviewed by Gretchen Rix

FALSE DAWN is a Chelsea Quinn Yarbro adventure novel expanded from her 1973 story in STRANGE BEDFELLOWS, edited by Thomas N. Scortia. In it Yarbro details a young mutant woman struggling for survival in a brutally ugly future world. Thea is that woman.

Raped early in the novel, Thea's cross country trek for a sanctuary from the horror the world has become serves two purposes: she survives, and she learns to love and trust a dangerous man who has thrown himself on her mercy. The man is Evan Montague.

Before the novel begins Montague is a Pirate leader. In FALSE DAWN Pirates make the Hell's Angels look like...well, angels. War and pollution have poisoned the Earth. Ruthless and frightening in his thoroughness, Montague leads his marauders in bloody raids that make him legend. He says, however, that his aim is to unite surviving mutant people with surviving "Normals".

After Montague gets tossed out of his gang and left for dead, the Pirates go on a rampage of murder and rape. When Montague's continued existence is verified, he and Thea, the mutant woman who has sheltered him, become their primary targets. FALSE DAWN is the story of their run.

Anything and everything they meet turns on the pair -- an old woman who turns out to be a cannibal, straight-laced monks in the throes of their own personal Inquisition, the community of mutants that takes them in. Indeed, this reliance on gimmicky villains is one distracting flaw in the novel. If their adversaries had been less outrageous, more superficially benign they might have been more horrifying in the long run.

Montague and Thea have to depend on each other or die. In their travail Thea grows to trust her companion. She changes just enough to take in that trait. Montague, on the other hand, does his changing before the book even begins. What might have been a novel of characterization, two people growing because of mutual dependence and the horror of the time, is not. It is, however, a graphic, fast, violent and tragic look at a futile journey. The grim adventure story that is FALSE DAWN has a good ending.

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NEBULA AWARD STORIES NINE
Edited by Kate Wilhelm
Bantam Books for July, 1978
257 pp., $1.95

Reviewed by David A. Truesdale

Originally published in hardcover by Harper & Row back in January of 1975, this paperback release of eight superlative stories, two cogent and intersting essays and a creditable summation of the year 1973 in science fiction is now, belatedly, available to the general public.

The stories include the Nebula Award-winning "The Death of Doctor Island" by Gene Wolfe, "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand" by Vonda N. McIntyre, and "Love is the Plan the Plan is Death" by Alice Sheldon writing as James Tiptree, Jr.

The other runners-up include Ed Bryant's "Shark", "With Morning Comes Mistfall" by George R.R. Martin, Harlan Ellison's highly imaginative "The Deathbird", the whimsical and ironic "A Thing of Beauty" by Norman Spinrad and Carol Emshwiller's "The Childhood of the Human Hero". All stories are worthy of attention and deserving of their place in this solid Nebula collection, which is rendered even more so by Kate Wilhelm's perceptive introduction wherein she demonstrates the close linkage of the philosophical Idea to the treatment and role of the Idea in science fiction and how this bonding will be ever with us, and Ben Bova's thought-provoking science essay "The Future of Science: Prometheus, Apollo, Athena", which tries to show us once again that Science is not in itself a Good or an Evil but it is how Man uses it that will shape our future, or destruction.

At least in its short fiction, this volume will have us remember that 1973 was a good year for science fiction, and Kate Wilhelm has given us a well-rounded collection to prove it.

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MARCHERS OF VALHALLA
SKULL-FACE
SON OF THE WHITE WOLF
SWORDS OF SHAHRAZAR
BLACK CANAAN

By Robert E. Howard
Berkeley Books, $1.95

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

I wonder who holds the record for most stories published posthumously. Personally, I suspect the prime candidate for the honor is Robert E. Howard. Since his death 40 years ago, his literary executor Glenn Lord has gotten dozens of his stories into print in numerous professional and semi-professional markets. Recently, a great number of these stories have been collected into paperbacks. Howard's fiction is earning more each year 40 years after his death than it ever did during Howard's entire lifetime.

This is the third publication of MARCHERS OF VALHALLA, the first two being Grant Books hardbacks. The thing seems to grow with each publication, from two to three, now eight tales. Fritz Leiber's interesting introduction (also new in this edition) does what an introduction is supposed to do: make the reader want to read the stories. Of these stories (only two published during Howard's lifetime), the best is easily the lead tale, "The Grey God Passes". Based on an actual battle between Irish Gaels (whom Howard claimed descent from) and Vikings, it is told in Howard's hard-hitting action-filled prose which keeps the reader interested by not letting the suspense or action flag.

SKULL-FACE contains four tales which are part of what editing author Richard Lupoff terms "the Kathulos mythos". They all at least peripherally deal with a surviving Atlantean sorcerer named Kathulos--the "Skull-Face" of the title. Done in imitation Fu Manchu tradition, these tales (especially the second and third, done as detective stories--a genre Howard disliked) are relatively minor Howard. The title story is the best of them, and has a goodly dollop of Howardian action and suspense. The final tale, "Taveral Manor" is a posthumous collaboration with Richard Lupoff; it was previously published as "Return of Skull-Face".

SON OF THE WHITE WOLF and SWORDS OF SHAHRAZAR are in no way, shape or form anything resembling horror fantasy. They are wholly desert adventures of the Lawrence of Arabia sort. SON OF THE WHITE WOLF has Francis Xavier Gordon--also known as "El Borak"--as the hero. This volume is a continuation of El Borak's adventures which have been printed in LOST VALLEY OF ISKANDER and THREE-BLADED DOOM, published by Zebra Books. SOWRDS OF SHAHRAZAR has Kirby O'Donnell as hero, but besides that, there seems to be little else different from the El Borak stories.

BLACK CANAAN is the latest Howard collection to be released and has an introduction by Gahan Wilson. It has quite a bit of Lovecraftian-type fiction. These are straight horror tales, rather than heroic fantasy. The title story and the concluding tale--"Moon of Zambebwei" --have a large portion of racial prejudice towards blacks in them, which is distasteful, but knowing Howard to be a 1930s Texan, it's surprising that most of his stories are prejudice-free.

Each of these Berkeley Howard books have a similar cover format, with the words "by the Creator of CONAN" featured prominently. Each cover is by K.W. Kelly in the Frazetta-Jones-Vallejo tradition, and is reproduced in a fold-out included with the book without the cover lettering. None of these books is Howard at his best, but all are enjoyable.

With all these new Howard collections, I wonder if there's any truth to the rumor that Howard is returned from the dead and that Glenn Lord visits his grave each full moon to pick up more stories.

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THE WATCH HOUSE
By Robert Westall
New York, Greenwillow, 1978, 217 pp.
$6.95 Order from: Greenwillow Books, 105 Madison Ave, New York, NY, 10016. ISBN: 0-688-80149-8

Reviewed by Frederick Patten

This novel is blurbed as "This powerful ghost story ... a tense and terrifying struggle for vengeance", which is how I like them. So I began it in pleasant anticipation. The writing was good, but after about the first forty pages I began to wonder where any element of the supernatural was at all, much less a "powerful ghost story"? Then slowly the eeriness began to build, and halfway through the novel, WHAM! it hit with full force and didn't let up until the last page. So fans of supernatural fiction may begin THE WATCH HOUSE without any qualms that they will get their full money's worth by the end of the book, even if it does get off to a slow start.

Anne, an English girl just entering her teens, is dumped by her mother on the mother's old nanny to spend the summer, while her parents undergo a messy separation. Old Prudie and her brother Arthur live in a small coastal town where they are the custodians of the Watch House on the cliff overlooking the ocean. The Watch House had been built during the previous century as the headquarters of a volunteer rescue brigade, to save lives from ships wrecked upon the offshore rocks during storms. Modern powered shipping has made the Watch House obsolete and it has decayed into a shabby maritime museum. Anne, sullen and shaken by her parents' marital split, takes some time to adjust to the rural atmosphere and to make acquaintances among the local youth. (The reader will later realize that Westall is imperceptably laying the groundwork for the action that finally comes.)

Once the story begins to move, it is developed as a finely crafted mystery. Small incidents begin to happen; are they natural or not? If not, are they caused by a human or a supernatural agent? Is "the Old Feller", the spirit of the life Brigade's founder, a real ghost or just a comic tradition invented by its later members? If he is real, why are the manifestations alternately benevolent and destructive? Is there more than one ghost? Anne's new friends, Pat and Timmo, point out that poltergeist activity is caused by emotionally disturbed adolescents; is she subconsciously causing the manifestations herself? The clues accumulate, and are examined and rearranged like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle by the three teenagers.

Timmo insists upon playing amateur psychic detective, despite Anne's misgivings that they are taking on more than they can handle. As they learn more and more about the Watch House's ominous history, Timmo becomes increasingly determined to combat the force head-on. The last third of the book is an all-out battle between the three youths and the deadly psychic power that has grown out of control. Both Anne, Pat, and Timmo and the menace are equally the hunters and the hunted, and it is a race as to whether the supernatural force can destroy those who flushed it before they can exorcise it -- with dissention among the heroes, as Anne wants to call upon religious assistance while Timmo insists upon taking a scientific metaphysical approach.

Westall makes his novel seem real through the weight of convincing detail. The North Sea town of Garmouth is vividly depicted (the Northumberland dialect occasionally gets a bit strong). Anne, Timmo, and Pat are realistic teen-agers, clowning and wisecracking one minute and attempting to put on a mature front the next. Considering how veddy British the atmosphere is, I was both surprised and delighted when Pat makes an offhand reference to Sturgeon's "Killdozer". The novel skillfully alternates

scenes of horror and tension with interludes of relaxation and humor, of varying lengths so that you cannot guess when or how the ghost will next strike. THE WATCH HOUSE is an excellent supernatural thriller that transcends its "young adult" packaging. Highly recommended.

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THE WOLFEN
By Whitley Strieber
New York, William Morrow, 1978
252 pp., $8.95
Order from: William Morrow & Co,Inc.
105 Madison Avenue, NY, NY, 10016
ISBN: 0-688-03347-4

Reviewed by Frederick Patten

Considering the number of complete bores that are posing as chilling horror novels these days, it's a pleasure to find one that is well worth reading. THE WOLFEN has some serious flaws, but it also has enough imagination and genuinely suspenseful setups to keep your attention hooked.

Two young policemen are killed and eaten in a deserted auto dump. As the reader knows from the cover blurbs, the killers are werewolves. The protagonists are the two detectives assigned to the case, George Wilson and Becky Neff. Circumstantial evidence indicates the killers were large dogs, but Wilson and Neff dig deeper and begin to get hints of the truth. Because of departmental politics, and because their theory is so incredible, they decide to keep quiet until they have undeniable proof. In the meantime the Wolfen have realized that they are discovered, and that they must kill their trackers before their existence is revealed. The novel becomes a hunt between the two, with the detectives forced increasingly onto the defensive.

The story's strong points are the characterization of the Wolfen pack, and the personal relationship between Wilson and Neff. The animals are a lupus sapiens, an unknown species, not literally able to change from man to wolf but a type of super-wolf with almost human intelligence and incredible wariness.

Glimpses of them over the centuries gave rise to the werewolf legends. Strieber does a fine job of depicting the thought processes, personalities, and habits of an intelligent non-human species, and turns them into quite sympathetic creatures.

Similarly, the relationship between the protagonists is intelligently handled -- at least, in comparison with 90% of mainstream novels, where "relationship" only means getting them into bed together as often as possible. Wilson is old enough to be Neff's father, and is a sharp-tongued male chauvinist who's irascible partly because he's honest enough to recognize Neff's competence. Neff is a liberated woman who hates what Wilson represents, as well as many of his personal habits (he's a slob and proud of it), but grudgingly respects his efforts to rise above his prejudices. She's also uncomfortably aware that, in his bluntness, he's often more practical and realistic than her nice but sometimes ineffectual husband. Strieber creates a convincingly confused love-hate relationship between the two, keeping the reader guessing how it will develop.

But, while the Wolfen are fascinatingly real as individuals, Strieber's history of them is ridiculous. It's not believable for a moment that the Wolfen could have lived undetected among mankind for at least ten thousand years. They are supposed to live in the slums of big cities, preying upon derelicts whose disappearance would not be noticed. This might be credible for a period of a few years, but for all of recorded history? Strieber makes it clear that while they are superior to mankind in many respects, they are not more intelligent; in some respects they're less so. By all reasonable odds, the mishap that brings them to public attention here should happen every couple of years. Also, some of Strieber's claims don't hold up. He implies that locking oneself in an automobile with the windows rolled up is no protection against the Wolfen. Okay, that's scary, but how do they get victims out of cars -- without leaving any evidence of anything wrong? The one time this is done in the novel, the car's a gory mess. I would've found the Wolfen a lot more convincing if Strieber had postulated that they were some kind of new species, just getting started, instead of trying to stick such an unbelievable history onto them.

Further, the writing style is about as graceful as George Wilson's personal habits:

"The idea of Wilson messing around with anybody was ridiculous anyway; he had remained a bachelor partly out of choice and partly because few women would tolerate his arrogance and his sloppy indifference to even the most fundamental social graces, like taking the meat out of a hamburger and eating it separately, which was one of his nicer table manners".

That's both a single paragraph and a single sentence. Its matter-of-factness does make some of the horror scenes more convincingly chilling, however.

THE WOLFEN certainly isn't the werewolf novel in the sense that DRACULA is the vampire novel. But it's good for an evening's entertainment, which makes it above average in today's horror-fiction market.

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THE WIZARDS OF ZAO
By Lin Carter
Daw, June, 1978, 176 pp., $1.76

Reviewed by L. Craig Rickman

Lin Carter has a startling -- perhaps marvelous -- capacity for audacity.

THE WIZARD OF ZAO proves this conclusively.

In earlier Burroughisian and Howard Pastiches, Carter has hinted at a tremendous ego, an enormous quantity of pride in his works. For the record, I must say that this swagger is not totally unfounded. Lin Carter's contributions to fantasy are to his credit.

But this book ...

On more than one occasion while reading WIZARDS, I, in a fit of disbelief, tossed the book across the room. How could any writer subject his readers to 176 pages of such sheer audacity!

Allow me to quote an example:

> "It had rather an odd face ... and a long, fat nose ... resembled an elephant's trunk." *(Italics mine)

And, referencing the indicated footnote to the bottom of the page, I found:

> *A minor example of the writer's thoughtfulness to the reader ... would have thought the organ in question resembled the proboscis of an enfeld ... so I have modified the term for my reader's benefit. The skills involved in this kind of work require considerable forethought. I just wanted to point this out in case you thought I was getting careless! (Italics again mine, as is the exclamation point)

This was one of the times that I tossed the book against the farthest wall!

Lin Carter is well known for his "rules" of fantasy writing. In WIZARDS, Mr. Carter manages to break nearly everyone of those rules, while dangling his mistake right in front of your nose, inquiring the while if you noticed his ineptness, making you feel the Fool if you didn't! And he dares to do this again and again, page after page, until the reader can hardly remember the story Carter has to tell (And there is one in WIZARDS, believe it or not -- a pretty good one, at that!). The first ten pages I was puzzled, then amazed over the next twenty or so, becoming impatient and angry through the middle of the book, and then -- well, I think I began to enjoy THE WIZARDS OF ZAO!

Carter's imagination, despite his stereotyping and cliches, is wild; his prose is interesting. In many of his books, however, there exists a certain affinity between book and writer. Such is the case with WIZARD. The reader finds that he is unable to totally escape because the guy whose name is on the cover keeps popping into the pages, parading about in footnotes, forewords, introductions, afterwords, etc. -- making damn sure you know who wrote what you're reading. This is, to say the least, annoying -- so annoying that I began to admire the originality, the freshness of WIZARDS. Sound insane? So is this book.

Several things can be said about THE WIZARDS OF ZAO: First, I think that I enjoyed WIZARDS. Secondly, I recommend Carter's latest to all with hot tempers. (But buy a couple of copies; paperbacks wear ill under harsh handling!)

And thirdly, I know who wrote the goddamned book: Lin Carter ... LIN CARTER!

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IMMORTAL: SHORT NOVELS OF THE TRANSHUMAN FUTURE
Edited by Jack Dann
Introduction by R.C.W. Ettinger
Harper & Row, 1978, 225 pp., $9.95
Cover art by Ron Walotsky

Reviewed by Gretchen Rix

It is subheaded SHORT NOVELS OF THE TRANSHUMAN FUTURE. It sounds boring. The parenthetical title brings to mind a textbook smell and unimaginative writing and lecturing and having to keep your eyelids propped open to even see the page. And transhuman? I didn't want to read it at all and kept moving it to the bottom of my stack of books to do. Which was unfortunate. Because it is not boring. Not at all is it boring.

IMMORTAL: SHORT NOVELS OF THE TRANSHUMAN FUTURE is a good collection of four stories. Two of the novellas or novelettes or whatever they are here are fantastically good and rate whole novels unto themselves. I think one will eventually have at it. The other two stories are okay, and the introduction, about immortalism by R.C.W. Ettinger, is quite interesting and amusing. But two of the stories herein are really outstanding.

"Chanson Perpetuelle", from a work in progress by Thomas M. Disch, is one of these. It is used to lead off this transhuman future anthology; a bit of a mistake since you hate for this tale to end.

In a quiet, moody and totally realized piece of writing Disch has created a future in which mortals are a small but genetically dominant minority of the humans on Earth. They grow old and die while their immortal friends, lovers and fellow strangers watch them pass and forget. They cope.

Emma Rosetti is the heroine of the story, a mortal woman of 2098. She climbs mountains. She spends her time carefully polishing restored silver pieces destined for the vat; it is her job. She lives with an old man whom she loves. And she leaves him, later, to initiate a liason with one of them. "Chanson Perpetuelle" is the story of Emma's time.

Her world includes the Ferlas Mor of Ben MacDhui. It takes in the "Whump!" of the extinct rhinocerous, visits to the zoo, strangers on the train and chance meetings.

All of it is quiet and real and described in the kind of minute detail that makes you live the story, not just read it. It's not the plot that makes "Chanson Perpetuelle" outstanding, at least not here, but its music. You savor the words. You try them in your head and delight at the sound. And are quite sorry when the story stops.

The other really good piece here is Pamela Sargent's "The Renewal".

Again we have immortal human beings on a future Earth. A small group of immortals, all of whom survived the Transition, a period of violence brought on by their change, are drawn together for a genetic experiment. They are asked to bear and parent children designed to be a step up on the evolutionary scale.

Not many people are having children any more, but these children will be different. They will resemble their parents except in some not so subtle respects. They will be hermaphrodites and lack human hormonal responses. They will be logical, not emotional. They will move differently; they will think differently. They will be transhuman.

"The Renewal" is Josepha Ryba's story. A loner, a lonely woman who decides to have a child and is talked into letting it be one of the redesigned ones, she forms a relationship with another troubled survivor, the man Chane Maggio. They live together but remain aloof and grow more and more unhappy as their new children emerge as enigmas in their isolated village. These children are different. They seem to tolerate the emotional attachments their parents have for them, but they do not understand. They mock. And they learn and grow. Eventually they are attacked from the outside.

In "The Renewal" Pamela Sargent posits a new human being coming into conflict with the norm. The story of Josepha Ryba, an immortal learning to need someone, is skillfully meshed with a tale of transhumans being molded into new patterns. It, too, was too short a story.

In "The Doctor of Death Island" Gene Wolfe has written about another facet of immortality. His main character is Alan Alvard. Alvard is immortal; he is also serving a life sentence for murder.

Imprisoned for killing his business partner, Alvard, the man who invented talking books, was dying of cancer when frozen cryogenically. When he is revivified he is immortal; still in prison but alive and immortal. With no way out.

But there's something about those talking books he created that no one else knows. Something about Charles Dickens. And about some of Dickens's characters, Little Nell in particular. Alvard has had a plan all along.

A clever piece of hardwear trickery highlights this otherwise stark story about Alvard and life in a future prison. Though I won't mess up by saying just what that trickery is, the mood of the story is considerably lightened by it in retrospect. "The Doctor of Death Island" remains interesting.

The final story in IMMORTAL is George Zebrowski's "Transfigured Night", about a future in which death is no longer necessary for personality renewal. In this story the body continues but its memories are negated. Immortal beings have all of their past lives wiped out, thus condemning themselves to endless repetition. They could care less.

In this future all experience can be manufactured for participatory pleasure without any of the risks inherent in actually living them out. And this is what Thrushcross does. I think. That is until one alien being butts in and offers him a new choice.

"Transfigured Night" comprises Thrushcross's dreams and the past lives he is forced to remember through this alien's interference. It is the story of his chance for change and makes much more sense on its second reading. It was interesting.

IMMORTAL is highlighted by its inclusion of the Disch excerpt and the Sargent story. The Zebrowski and Wolfe stories are also of interest, and the addition of the introduction, a reading list of books about immortality and a brief biography of the authors makes this collection well worth reading.

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A RESEARCH GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES: An annotated Checklist of Primary and Secondary Sources for Fantasy and Science Fiction
Compiled and edited by Marshall B. Tymn, Roger C. Schlobin and L.W. Currey
New York, Garland, 1977, 165 pp.
$21.00
Order from: Garland Pub, Inc., 545 Madison Ave., NY,NY 10022
ISBN: 0-8240-9886-2

Reviewed by Frederick Patten

This specialized title, by its nature and its price, is obviously aimed at research libraries and similar institutional purchasers rather than the individual who pays for books out of his or her own cash. Still, it's nice that such a bibliography does exist. Possibly you can talk your local university library into ordering a copy which you can then use.

"...this bibliography confronts the problem of where to locate the scholarly materials that have appeared since World War II. The volume contains over 500 entries covering both general and specialized sources that span the entire range of science fiction scholarship, including general surveys, histories, genre studies, author studies, bibliographies and indices, articles and book reviews. Each title is carefully categorized and fully annotated. Also included are special appendices of Ph.D. dissertations on science fiction, teacher's resource materials, and library collections. This bibliography is a practical guide to scholarly materials for anyone with an interest in science fiction research."

A RESEARCH GUIDE seems very comprehensive. I can't think of any worthwhile title that isn't listed here, with the possible exception of a few understandably obscure studies in fanzines. (They didn't include my Master's bibliography on Andre Norton, but since UCLA doesn't index or even keep its M.L.S. bibliographies, the editors can be excused for not knowing such a work ever existed.) The section on s-f films does leave out most of the cheaply-produced sci-fi/horror-movie picture histories, but the titles that are included cover the genre thoroughly.

The book is well arranged so that material can be easily found. I might quibble about a few of the classifications -- for instance, I'd have put Franson/DeVore, A HISTORY OF THE HUGO, NEBULA AND INTERNATIONAL FANTASY AWARDS in "Subject Bibliographies" rather than "General Bibliographies" -- but since all titles are readily locateable anyway through the author and title indices at the back of the GUIDE, it's a moot point. The annotations are all brief and intelligent.

It's interesting to flip through the section on "Author Studies and Bibliographies" and see which authors seem to attract scholarly studies the most readily. There are 3 works on Asimov, 1 on Bloch, 3 on Bradbury, 6 on ERB, 1 on Campbell, 2 on Ellison, 4 on Heinlein, 5 on Howard, 16 on Lovecraft...

It's also interesting to note in the section on "Doctoral Dissertations in Science Fiction and Fantasy" that most of the older disertations are on individual authors, and the more respectable British mainstream fantasists, at that: Meredith, Morris, Wells, Huxley, Forester, Orwell, Lewis, etc. Most of the newer theses are on s-f as a subject, such as "Modern Science Fiction" and "Science and Fiction in the Science Fiction Novel", as though no individuals had yet emerged from the shadows of the notorious s-f ghetto.

In addition to listings of all these monographs, there are also sections on "Periodicals" (ALGOL, LOCUS, LUNA, SF COMMENTARY, etc.) and on "Special Issues" (individual issues devoted to s-f or non-sf scholarly magazines). A section titled "Sources for Acquisition" lists the addresses of several of the better-known s-f specialty bookshops, as well as some directories of second-hand and antiquarian bookdealers throughout the English-speaking world.

If you are a literary academician, and if you have a book budget to work with, A RESEARCH GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES is certainly a title that you should request for your campus library. If you happen to be a student doing research, call your instructor's attention to this volume. And also to any of the works listed inside it which look interesting. Help to make your campus a better place for the s-f scholar.

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ORON
By David C. Smith
Zebra Books, June 1978, 395 pp.
Illustrated, $1.95

Reviewed by Don Herron

David Smith wrote ORON in 1973 and revised it recently for this first edition publication. It is the second novel he finished; a couple of more recent Robert E. Howard pastiches, one written in collaboration with Richard Tierney, have preceded it into print. This novel chronicles the rise of the warrior-conquerer Oron to military supremacy of the ancient island-continent Attluma, and his destined struggle to halt the resurgence of Kossuth, an arch-daemon who appears to work evil on earth every thousand years.

Because it is about the sweeping victories of an Alexander the Great-like conqueror, ORON necessarily treats of war -- too much so for my taste, in fact. The first of the novel's three sections is concerned almost totally with Oron's rise in ranks, with battle on a large scale. The numerous military sequences are too repetitious, the writing too full of blood and guts, screaming and drooling. My interest lagged in these meat-grinding clashes of army against army. Unless you read S&S just for that sort of scenery, the battlefield gets tedious fast. The tighter plotting and cleaner writing Smith used in his Black Vulmea book THE WITCH OF THE INDIES, a fine light adventure novel published earlier by Zebra, is not evident in the opening chapters of ORON.

By the second section, though, the sub-plots get moving. Oron consolidates his position as conqueror, marries, becomes aware of the presence of Kossuth, but refuses to acknowledge his obligation to halt the metastasizing forces of evil. Still there are too many battle scenes, though noticeably less than in preceding chapters.

Section three is a grim and very well done conclusion; it weaves the threads of fate and sub-plots together and delivers on the promise Smith has shown as a novelist. The gloomy atmosphere, the surprises, and the epic confrontation of the sword of Oron against the sorcery of Hell makes the third section the best part of the book and makes reading through all those battle scenes seem somewhat easier in retrospect.

The third section heading, "The Na-Kha", meaning the World-Hero, is missing in this edition; it should appear over chapter 17. A goodly number of typos plague the text too, a common problem in new books from Zebra. Otherwise the novel has lavish production, with cover painting and many interior illustrations by Clyde Caldwell. The typeface is large, which makes reading easier, and even considering the size of the typeface, ORON is a big book. It gives you some substance for the money and some good scenes as well. Many tiny books now cost $1.95 and don't do as much.

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# THE BEAST OF BEACHWOOD

## FILM REVIEWS AND NEWS BY BILL WARREN

Australian films have begun to be extremely interesting; for years, nothing much came out from Down Under except SMILEY and Chips Rafferty. A few U.S. and British films were shot down there, but except for THE SUNDOWNERS, they were mostly transplanted star vehicles.

The last thing I would have expected, given the apparently joking and frontierish image that the Australians seem to enjoy presenting to the world, is that the Aussie movies would be deeply intelligent and subtle. Some, in fact, are masterpieces.

Few of the Australian films have been fantasies, and few have played in the U.S. I'm not entirely certain why. Some are art house fare, that's true -- but others seem entirely commercial. I understand that the Australian-made rock version of THE WIZARD OF OZ has played in some parts of the country (it was called OZ in Australia; I don't know what it's called here). PATRICK, apparently a very powerful psychic thriller, is intended for release in the states, as are Peter Weir's films. An Australian company is filming Ian Barry's SPARKS, which is science fiction. Also, a feature-length cartoon featuring the talents of Rolf Harris -- who, to the despair of Australians I know, is my favorite performer in the whole wide world -- will soon begin production. The title is THE LITTLE CONVICT.

Other films recently announced include Paddy Chayefsky's ALTERED STATES. This was to have been directed by Arthur (BONNIE & CLYDE) Penn, but he recently backed out. The film is based on Chayefsky's first novel, and is about the physical regression of a scientist. John Dykstra has been signed to do the effects.

A new version of CHANDU THE MAGICIAN has been announced. The script is by Ian La Frenais and Richard Clement, and Peter Sellers is going to play Chandu. He's also the co-producer.

TV cartoons of THE RETURN OF THE KING, FRODO THE HOBBIT AND THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE are in production. The TV movie SALVAGE, starring Andy Griffith, is about an enterprising junkman who decides to retrieve space hardware. This does not seem to be cost-effective to me. It's expected to be the first of several films about the character.

Jeannot Szwarc is to direct ALPHA, from a script by Claire Noto, who until recently was co-writing the "Red Sonja" comic book with Roy Thomas.

George C. Scott and his wife, Trish Van Devere, are to star in THE CHANGELING, another EXORCIST imitation (apparently), which is being advertised as a "true story". Suuuuuuure it is, and Oi'm the Queen o' Sheba. I suppose it's like THE AMITYVILLE HORROR, currently filming.

I'm sure you will be delighted to know that PHANTASM, completed and ready for release, stars Angus Scrimm as The Tall Man.

WEATHER WAR is the latest science fiction film that the producers are cautiously describing as "science fact", a meaningless term if there ever was one. The script is by Stirling Silliphant, one of those people you wonder about -- how did he ever get a reputation as a good writer?

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME, which will not be much like Wells, is shooting in Canada with Jack Palance, John Ireland and a funny robot. Release will be through Allied Artists next summer.

THE ISLAND, Huxley's novel, has been optioned again for filming. And CHILDHOOD'S END is once again on someone's production slate, but I doubt that it will be finished.

SPACEPORT has been announced, but this is probably not Curt Siodmak's novel-screenplay.

1941 is being directed by Steven Spielberg from a script by John Milius, who is acting as executive producer. The film, according to sources who've read the script, is a fantasy of sorts. The peculiar cast so far includes John Belushi, Christopher Lee, Warren Oates, Robert Stack, Dan Ackroyd and Toshiro Mifune.

And now on to reviews.

### ALFRED, WHAT HAST THOU WROUGHT?

If I were to describe the plot of the film as follows, what would you say it is? A young woman leaves her lover and heads for another town; she stops at a peculiar rooms-for-rent place and meets a strange young man who works there. An old lady also there, never leaves her rooms. The young man watches the newcomer through the wall, and after a while, the young woman dies in the bathroom. The young man covers up the crime. Since I asked that question above, you must know this isn't PSYCHO.

It's SLIPPING INTO DARKNESS. Once again, someone has thought the best way to honor Hitchcock is to imitate him; sometimes this results in good films, like CHARADE or TARGETS, but that's only when the filmmaker understands he has obligations to his audience. The writer-director (Richard Cassidy) of SLIPPING INTO DARKNESS has designed his effects to please himself only, where any sort of intent can be detected. The film is extremely boring and self-indulgent; the characters are so badly developed as to seem almost arbitrary in behavior. In fact, I couldn't see anything good about it. In addition to being otherwise poor, it's also repellent. The girl is diabetic, and goes into insulin shock while taking a bath, and she

drowns. The young man takes the body into his room and keeps it around for purposes of sex. The crippled old lady who owns the house drags herself upstairs to find the source of the nauseating odor, and finds the decomposing body, dressed in a wedding gown.

The young actor playing the weirdo provides no motivation for his character's behavior. He's so erratic in his acting that I couldn't tell at first that he was supposed to be slightly retarded; he was so busy trying to act like Brando that he lost track of what he was doing. I doubt that this film will be released, which is just fine with me.

DRACULA IS DEAD AND WELL AND LIVING IN LONDON

-- was the shooting title of a picture that later became THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA, and was purchased by Warner Brothers the year it was completed, 1973. Along with THE WICKER MAN and SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES, this went on the shelf, and for a while it seemed as though it might never be released in this country.

But Max Rosenberg, the lesser half of the team that once formed Amicus Productions, bought the film from Warners, gave it the utterly pointless title of COUNT DRACULA AND HIS VAMPIRE BRIDE, and it's now in general release. It's certainly better than the film to which it's a sequel, DRACULA A.D. 72, and even though the plot is rather peculiar, at least it's not a vampire-at-large-in-a-modern-city rehash. Dracula here plays a shadowy, Howard Hughes-type, who is trying to take over the world by means of indoctrinating world leaders into a satanic cult. His end goal: the destruction of human life, which would seem counter-survival for a vampire. But Dracula, as psychoanalyzed by Van Helsing (from a distance), has gone insane. They have a very nice confrontation scene, very low-key and eerie, set in a modern office.

Christopher Lee, playing Dracula for what he claims is the last time, is convincing but less energetic than previously. Van Helsing is Peter Cushing. It's such a pleasure for me to see these two actors together again. Apart from comedy teams and studio series casts, I suspect they've made more movies together than any other two leading actors. They just finished another one, AN ARABIAN ADVENTURE, and I hope they make many more.

COUNT DRACULA AND HIS VAMPIRE BRIDE was, like its predecessor, directed by Alan Gibson, and he seems to be improving. It's too bad that Hammer is essentially out of the film business.

COFFIN DROPS

At last, Oklahoma has its own film industry! At least, that's what's claimed in the end credits for ALIEN ZONE, a film made entirely in Oklahoma. It's not an auspicious debut for that state. The picture's a lame, dull and familiar anthology of terror tales (the original title was FIVE FACES OF FEAR). An adulterous husband takes shelter from the rain with a mysterious mortician, who tells him a tale about each of four stiffs laid out in their coffins in the other room.

The first story is an absurdity about a teacher who hates children; she's apparently torn apart by little kid ghouls. Her offense seemed way less severe than the punishment. The second story features Burr De Benning (you loved him in THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN) as an insane photographer, who takes movies of his murders of women; except for a few shots, the film is rather imaginatively told from the point of view of his movie camera. It seems to be stolen from Michael Powell's remarkable PEEPING TOM. The third story is the best, and is about a couple of detectives, played by Bernard Fox and Charles Aidman, who are battling for the position of the World's Greatest Sleuth. The fourth features Rick Gates as a harmless if a little unfeeling businessman who is mysteriously transformed into a wino. Again, the punishment hardly fits the crime. The frame story, starring John Ericson, concludes in the expected way.

I don't recall the director of the film but she doesn't seem promising. It's stiff, unimaginative and very dull. It's professional in appearance unlike most other low-budget features, but the stories are so familiar and the treatment is so pedestrian that I don't think it has many commercial possibilities.

STALL WALLS

The first full-fledged imitation of STAR WARS has been released. United Artists is distributing MESSAGE FROM SPACE, a Japanese movie that was filmed in such a hurry that it opened in Japan before STAR WARS (delayed about a year). Toei, the company that produced MESSAGE FROM SPACE, sent its crews to the U.S. so that they could see WARS again and again, in an effort to duplicate the effects.

The ships look very similar, there's an even more frighteningly energetic princess (plus a stately, more Japanesy one), stalwart young heroes, a funny robot, swordplay and a cloaked, wise general (Vic Morrow, no less). The plot is a bizarre hodgepodge of elements from STAR WARS and Japanese-style material (interstellar walnuts sent out by an ancient wise man find heroes). The special effects are pretty bad; they are, as usual for Japanese films, quite imaginative -- a clipper ship sails through space -- and not done at all the way those in STAR WARS were. Here, the ships are almost all live-action miniatures, with a bizarre inclusion of television-generated shots every now and then.

I yield to few in my enjoyment of many Japanese fantastic films; Godzilla always amuses me, and the other monster films have their charms as well. But MESSAGE FROM SPACE falls pretty flat in all departments; it's not guileless enough to be laughed at, and it's certainly not funny enough to be laughed with (the monster films are generally both). The pacing is slow and the plot structure creates endless waits. The film is almost over before the walnuts find the last hero (the funny robot).

MESSAGE FROM SPACE does feature unusual elements like an entire zooming from the Andromeda nebula to Earth orbit in a day or two, and a general who resigns when he's refused permission to bury an obsolete robot buddy in orbit, and the usual Japanese con-man figure, in a loud blazer and a straw hat (made of aluminum). It's a lot more cynically motivated than most Japanese pictures and the slavish imitation of many of STAR WARS' elements except that film's swift pace makes MESSAGE FROM SPACE hard to sit through.

ERB-DUMB

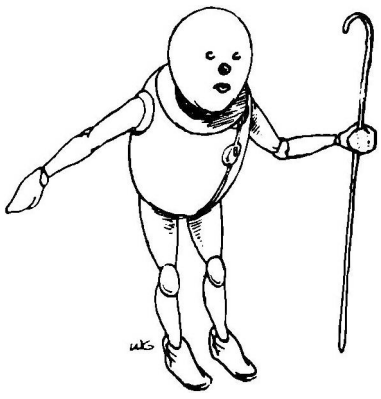
Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. has prevented the use of the title TARZOOM, SHAME OF THE JUNGLE. I suppose the film will now just be called (blotch) SHAME OF THE JUNGLE. (Instead of rephotographing the title card, they blobbed out the name; on the soundtrack, the name "Tarzoom" was electronically reversed.) This is a French-Belgian cartoon parody of Tarzan, which is mostly crude and gross. There's plenty of sexual jokes -- the villainess' mass-produced henchmen are giant penises and balls, which bound around comically -- but not much else.

The storyline isn't worth mentioning, because it's obvious and clumsily handled. One sequence seems to have been redone over here, be-

cause John Belushi is credited with the creation of a midwestern guru; he also did the voice. The film is also extremely gruesome and violent; there are disembowelings of dozens of creatures -- a herd of natives devours everything in their path -- the ape-man's penis keeps getting stretched. You know, that sortof stuff. The film is occasionally funny but it's mostly just obvious. However, the music is very good; it's bouncy and off-rhythm in a constantly amusing way. I don't know why ERB, Inc. bothers to slap down things like this. The film is harmless and when released, will soon be forgotten except for campuses and revival houses. The treatment of Tarzan and Jane is strictly on a dull underground comic level.

SLOWER THAN MEETS THE EYE

Every now and then, a pretentious writer decides that he can handle subject matter usually treated by hacks much better than they can. Unfortunately, this is almost inevitably incorrect. Hacks know the rules; they know how to create certain reactions in their usual audiences; they know what's been done before. The slumming intellectual does not, and keeps re-inventing the horror movie wheel. The most recent example of this is William Goldman and MAGIC.



The novel was so bland and unexciting that I was startled to realize it had been a best seller. What was it that made it sell? Not sex; there wasn't any, to speak of. I confess that I haven't the foggiest idea. The storyline was certainly nothing new. It's the old one about the ventriloquist with the split personality; he himself is shy, kind and weak-willed, while the dummy is cruel, sardonic and forceful. (Why isn't it ever the other way around?) The ending is always tragic; the two cannot live together, and they certainly can't live separately. In MAGIC, directed by Richard Attenborough, Anthony Hopkins is Corky the ventriloquist-magician, and Fats (carved to look like Hopkins) is the dummy.

Corky returns to his home town to visit the girl he'd unrequitedly loved while in high school; he discovers Peggy Ann Snow (wherever you follow I will go) still lives at her family's Catskills resort, but now she's married and her parents are dead. Corky almost persuades Peggy to leave with him, but his agent shows up, realizes Corky needs psychiatric help. So Fats convinces Corky to kill the agent. Peggy's husband shows up. Need I go on?

Though familiar, the story could have been done well if the director hadn't been apparently afraid of trying to make a horror film.

The film is well-made in the usual ways -- good photography, sets, music, locations (northern California standing in for the Catskills), but it isn't involving or interesting. (DEAD OF NIGHT had a similar, much better, story.) The script presents Corky ready-made with all his problems and screwiness, and Hopkins' mannered performance doesn't allow us to care about him. It's one of those films in which we're supposed to be fond of the leading character simply because he is the leading character.

None of the leading characters are novel, and their relationships are tedious. It's hard to believe that Peggy Ann Snow would marry a clod like her husband is presented as being, despite assurances that he was different in high school. It's also hard to believe that all these years she had an unrequited love for Corky. They hop into the sack as soon as they reunite, and I didn't believe it. If you can't believe the characters in a story like this, there had better be plenty of suspense, shock or horror to back up this lack, but there's damned little of any of those in MAGIC. As I said, Attenborough seems afraid to make a horror movie, as if being scary would demolish the story.

The scene in which Corky kills the agent is drained of any shock value by confusing editing. A scene which follows could have been suspenseful, but Attenborough -- a fine actor himself -- backs off, and we're left with nothing. When Corky tries to hide the old agent's body in a lake, the victim comes to; this could have been scary, but it isn't. The ending has no suspense because it seems pre-ordained. Hasn't Attenborough seen any scary movies? Doesn't he know which camera angles to use, how to pace the editing, the performances, the music, to maximize shock? Only once, when Fats seems suddenly to move on his own, is there any fright in the film, and that's drained very fast.

An intellectual horror film may be a contradiction in terms. Horror films do not appeal to our intellect, so to approach making them as if they need to be thought out as drama is a real error. Sure, they have to be carefully planned, but to appeal to the audience's emotions, not their intellects. That approach has never worked, as far as I know. Even in the horror scene he included in THE MAGICIAN, Ingmar Bergman went right for the gut, not the mind. HALLOWEEN, reviewed last issue, has a dumb script, but it's a scary film -- because you think something's gonna getcha. You cannot be above gut-level material while making a horror movie -- because the audience isn't.

There's one thing about MAGIC that's excellent, however, and that's Ann-Margret as Peggy Ann Snow. She gives what I feel is an almost perfect performance, perhaps because Peggy Ann Snow is something like the person Ann-Margret herself might have been had she not become famous. Along with Dyan Cannon and Ellen Burstyn in anything, this is the best female performance I've seen this year.

Hopkins is overwrought, a common failing of intense British actors (like Attenborough himself). He's an insane twit at the beginning and the difference between him then and at the end is so slight that the outcome doesn't seem surprising or tragic, just inevitable. Ed Lauter, as the husband, is required to give a one-note performance; there's never any sign of the man Peggy married. This is too bad, because Lauter's a good, little-known actor whose first big break this was. As the agent, Burgess Meredith does an impression of real-life agent Swifty Lazar and of George Burns; he's less cutesy-wutesy than usual, which is all to the good.

MAGIC isn't terrible. It's just ordinary.

THE WIZ THAT IZ

I have never quite understood the goal of the play "The Wiz". This transplanting of "The Wizard of Oz" into a black milieu seemed even more limited than the original; at least, the old movie was in a generalized, if all-white, American culture. It was accessible to (if somewhat removed from) children of all races. Turning it into an all-black experience almost automatically turned it into an experience limited to blacks. The play, however, was still somewhat generalized, and kids liked it. While I have nothing against making ethnic

versions of classic stories, to make a Big Production of it seems contrary to the original intent.

Now it's been filmed by Sidney Lumet as the most expensive musical ever made. The basis of the play, which was a mere altering of the storyline into black instead of white stereotypes, has been changed for the film. Dorothy is not a little girl, as she was in the play, but a 24-year-old schoolteacher (Diana Ross) living in Harlem. She's never been below 125th street, and has no idea how the other half of the world lives. The Oz fantasy she experiences is designed to somehow introduce her to the world. I'm damned if I can figure out how it does that. Lumet was careful to keep the geography correct, so that Dorothy's journey through Oz, here rendered as a fabulous version of New York, is really a journey down Manhattan Island. But it's turned into such fantasy that it has no basis in reality. How can she learn to accept New York as anything like reality if she sees it as Oz? The end result seems to me to be the reverse of the intended effect. Dorothy would want even more to stay away from the Real World, if it can't be like Oz. Lumet discusses his motivations at length in FILM COMMENT, but he didn't convince me.

The film isn't bad; it's reasonably entertaining, and Ted Ross as the Lion and Nipsey Russell as the Tin Man are excellent, especially Russell. Diana Ross as Dorothy is acceptable, oddly enough; she's the one element I expected to fail the most obviously, but she's so childlike it isn't unbelievable. (What is, is to think of her as a teacher.) Michael Jackson as the Scarecrow is, unfortunately, insipid. He's almost like a hole in the screen, though he's trying hard. He's androgynous to begin with, and he is clearly trying to be endearing, but it just doesn't work. I blame Lumet for this.

The songs are extremely forgettable, except for "Ease on Down the Road" (and then the lyrics don't matter), and the wonderful "No Bad News" which the too-little-used Wicked Witch sings in her Sweat Shop. The other songs are mostly slow-paced ballads, and the lyrics are not compellingly listenable. They all sound alike and bring the film to a halt when they come on.

The film's pace is slow but steady. It's never boring, but it's never very engrossing, either. It's way overproduced and somewhat glum; there's no joy, and the real wizard (Richard Pryor) is not a charming humbug, but a weasely little rat. The climax isn't uplifting and fulfilling; it's perfunctory, charmless and over with a bang.

Lumet was just the wrong man for the job. He's certainly versatile in his choice of subject matter -- his last two films were EQUUS and NETWORK -- but that's because he tends to do everything in more or less the same way. He's too sophisticated, and the last thing the Wizard of Oz needs is sophistication of Lumet's Manhattan-sophisticate type. It's an innocent story, and should be treated with a great deal of innocence. Street-smart can be innocent, but here it's not. It's a fair movie. Ten years from now, while THE WIZARD OF OZ is still delighting people, THE WIZ will merely be a footnote. I'm not sure it could ever have been anything else.

## FAIR TO MIDDLING EARTH

Ralph Bakshi's $8 million production of THE LORD OF THE RINGS has been released and seems to be doing quite well. I think that once the film gets out of the big cities, the grosses will decline (as they will with THE WIZ, also). Tolkien fans are probably forming the largest share of the audience and they will soon be all used up.

What can I say about this film that you haven't heard already? Maybe something technical? Almost all reviews point out that rotoscoping was not the process to use. (For those who don't know: rotoscoping is an animation technique whereby live movie images are traced by animators, duplicating the live-action motions in cartoon form.) And Bakshi used it for the entire film; he shot a full-length live-action version of RINGS first, on sound stages here and on the plains of Spain, then had his staff of artists trace the entire film, frame-by-frame. Or so he says. It doesn't look like they traced more than every other frame in many scenes, and sometimes the same shots are used over again.

He claimed that this would give the animation shape and solidity that's not often seen in animated features. It also enabled him, he said, to use many more characters in a single shot than would ordinarily be possible. Both these seem indeed to be true, but the drawbacks are far more limiting than the advantages are liberating. For one thing, by shooting it in live action, you're limited to what can be shot with a movie camera, in terms of angles, motion, length of take and so forth. A straight animated film would not have these limitations and they tend to look more free and loose. Anyone remember the opening credits of THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN? There's a shot of the animated Panther in which the camera swings all the way around him much more rapidly and smoothly than would ever be possible in live action. That's the sort of thing that's missing from RINGS, though I suspect most viewers will not notice it specifically. They will notice the lack of liveliness, but won't know what to attribute it to.

Furthermore, in being shot as a live-action film, there are far more closeups that are held longer than in ordinary cartoon films. Unfortunately, the rendering on the faces isn't detailed enough to make the screen look like much more than a very flat drawing of a face. And there are those things called "held cels" (if that's the term). To avoid redrawing the same figure over and over, animators generally simply

use the same drawing for each successive frame, animating only that portion of it which will move in that shot. In an ordinarily animated film, this is generally not noticeable (unless the color balance is off); in a film that's all rotoscoped, where there's more movement to begin with, a sudden halting of movement in any portion of the frame pulls the eye to it at once. This happens repeatedly throughout RINGS, and gives the film a jumbled, jumpy look that's most distracting at first, until the eye becomes accustomed to it. (The hair on the hobbits' feet crawls around like a mass of ants; this results from poor in-betweening, and it's astounding that Bakshi let it out of the studio that way.)

The main drawback, however, and one that infuriates many people, is that not all the characters are rotoscoped. Some are merely live action footage treated slightly in the optical printer to look like cartoons. You'll see a drawn-looking figure standing beside a moving

photograph of a real person, and the clash is disconcerting. The inn scene near the beginning seems to be full of real people and cartoon hobbits, and the long, pointless Battle of Helms' Deep flicks back and forth from cartoon to live action in a style that confuses an already confusing sequence.

The rest of the film is professional. The somewhat overbearing score by Leonard Rosenman, which is overused, is basically good. The vocal cast, including John Hurt, Anthony Daniels and Andre Morell, is generally excellent, and as far as I could tell, all British. The physical-model cast, from which the drawings were taken, shows some awkwardness as actors, but whoever modeled Gandalf and Frodo were very good. (I suspect Billy Curtis was Frodo, and Billy Barty was Sam.) As a live-action director, for it's easy to judge him that way on this, Bakshi has certain drawbacks, but he can handle physical action quite well and shows promise of being able to handle a real live-action film in the future. The stunt work, not often a credit for cartoons, is good. The Balrog, though, is all too obviously a rotoscoped man in a suit. It looks very awkward.

As an adaptation, the film is generally successful. Until the breakup of the Fellowship of the Ring, there's little I would change or add to the script. But after that, the story becomes muddled (as it did for me in the original books); Frodo and Sam go off alone, and whenever the film returns to them, so does the interest. But the other surviving members of the Fellowship, except for Merry and Pippin (last seen in the hands of a foolishly-designed Treebeard) become involved with the Battle of Helms' Deep, which is a side issue.

The importance and implications of this battle and its relevance to what else is going on are extremely nebulous in the film, and also confused me in the book. The history is all created by Tolkien anyway, so fidelity to it seems somewhat moot. You don't know what's at stake -- if they lose the battle, what happens? The outcome of a battle depends on the viewer knowing what's going on, why the battle is taking place. Unless you know these things, no matter how well it's staged, a battle simply cannot be very interesting. Also, the movements of the various factors is somewhat confused.

I understand these battle scenes have been cut somewhat since I saw the film at the press preview, and that can only be good. The film is too damned long for a cartoon; Bakshi should have compressed more or only done one of the three volumes at a time. He's reverently faithful to the book, by and large, and so the story is very long. He's stuck with wrapping up everything in film two, if it ever gets made. You realize, of course, that a follow-up will necessarily be cheaper -- and that much worse.

A word should be said for the backgrounds. Though the style varies, they are generally excellent. The film isn't great; it could have been, I suppose -- but it's a reasonably good try. I just hope this spells the end of rotoscoping used this extensively.

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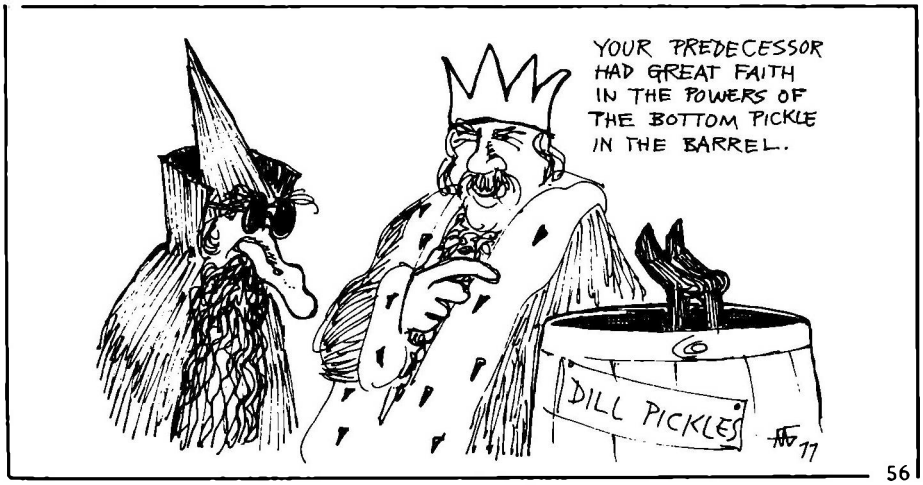





ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 38

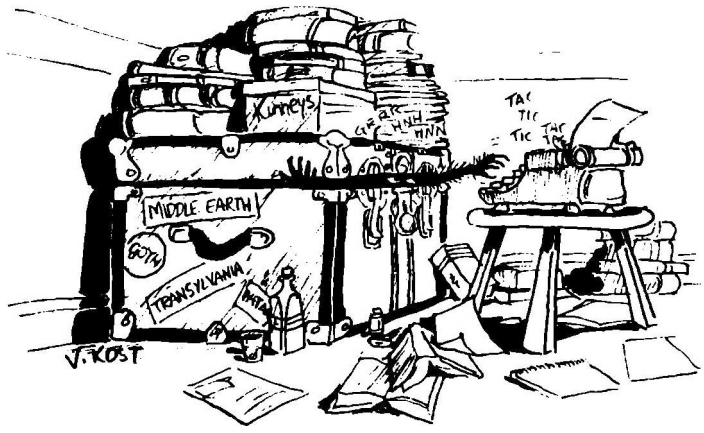
pliments for the last few issues. The latest inclusion that I thought was particularly interesting is Bill Warren's column, "Sprocket to Me!!!" I am not a big media fan and it is nice to be able to get a running list of the stuff that has been put out and is in the planning stages. It's helpful as well that he doesn't spend too much space on most of the listings. The column has had a fairly good pacing. Keep it up.

'I am concerned however -- in the back of my mind -- about the possibilities that the media is having upon fandom. Bill's column aptly points out the heavy numbers of films and television shows made for the genre, and I can't help but wonder if there is an entire generation of fans growing up who are solely media-minded. Until the sixties most of fandom revolved around the literature, but now there are media fandoms like Star Trek (and probably there will be a Star Wars fandom before long). And then last week, CBS ran a special on the increasing rate of illiteracy in the nation's schools -- around 13-15% of the graduating 17 year-olds are "functioning illiterates". Of course CBS skimmed over the one theory that TV has played a role in bad reading skills, but it was obvious from the interviews that it is one cause. I have even heard one opinion that the current generation will be the last literate generation in the United States, and that from here on we'll have an increasing number of high school graduates who can't even read or write.

'This has interesting repercussions on fandom which prides itself on having so many people with high I.Q.'s and college degrees. If this is the last literate generation, will mainstream fandom end up as an elite little group composed of those few people who can read and write? I do remember a scene from one Star Trek/Science Fiction convention of a sizable number of people who just came to watch episodes of TV science fiction series, and who were totally at a loss in the dealer's room whenever they looked over a fanzine. I wasn't even sure if some of them could read the titles. One fan said, "Oh, I don't buy fanzines, I'm just looking". Gad, will SF fandom soon consist of a lot of gadflies who flock to the conventions to see the pretty pictures? I'd

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 63

# SMALL PRESS NOTES




BY THE EDITOR

# Neal Wilgus, a frequent contributor to SFR, has written a book that will be dear to the hearts of paranoids and less-intense (but very suspicious!) conspiracy-thinkers. It is THE ILLUMINOIDS--Secret Societies & Political Paranoia.

Introduction by Robert Anton Wilson. Quality large-size paperback. $6.50. Published by Sun Books of Albuquerque, but you can order direct from Neal Wilgus: Box 25771, Albuquerque, NM 87125.

In tracing the foundations of the Illuminati through the early years, and in tracing secret societies and conspiracies through history, Neal is on very soft ground, and he knows it. Too much of his linkage is speculation and supposition and maybe... But there is an unexpected bonus---two of them!---in this book, for the reader. In pursuing secret control of the nation/world Wilgus read one hell of a lot of history, and in the process of giving a rundown of possible undercover memberships in this or that, who was friends with whom who in turn... In that process he gives a remarkably good look at the life and times of the famous men he has followed, and gives a keen insight into the history of the periods.

Another bonus is that the back section of the book has a section called "Sources of Illumination." It is a bibliography and a source of publishers (with addresses!) whose publications (named) which Neal has used and read in preparing his book. He has provided a wealth of underground and small-press sources for "unfit to print" facts, relationships and opinion of the conspiracy kind.

# Rip-Off Press sends me s-f and fantasy-oriented comic books to review. I usually do because I sometimes enjoy them and because it doesn't take much time to read & review.

Two new ones are THE WHOLE FORTY YEAR OLD HIPPIE CATALOG, $1., written and drawn by Ted Richards. It isn't a catalog, of course, it's your usual series of comic book stories about a central character.

The forty-year-old hippie is a die-hard counter-culturist from the sixties---and he looks like an old bearded, grey-haired bum. Maybe to the mind of a twenty-year-old 40 seems like ancient, but...

Well, the old geezer thinks he's really from another planet...

In another he tries to save whales and ends up in one like Jonah, and...

I look upon these comics as collectors' items. Rip-Off probably has a small print run for each, and in thirty, forty-fifty years....

The other comic is STAR WEEVILS, $1., written and drawn by J. Michael Leonard. Alien insects (weevils) have a base on the dark side of the moon. They decide to attack! A saucer-like ship sneaks up on Earth from 'behind'....

This is the segmented story of the star weevils' adventures on this planet---among the smaller creatures of the land. The aliens themselves are maybe one-half inch tall. Call it a tiny s-f adventure you couldn't take seriously.

The ordering address is P.O. Box 14158, San FRancisco, CA 94114. 30¢ extra for postage and handling.

# DRAGONFLAME & Other Bedtime Night-Mares, by Don McGregor, is a quality large-size softcover book. Short stories---some mundane, some fantasy, some s-f...some unclassifiable.

Readable. But. McGregor's style is frustrating to the reader; it grabs and holds...and then, in the hot steamy jungle of a suspenseful scene...it is stopped cold by McGregor's compulsion to explain and examine and speculate and explore motives and he does this all the time and he is revealed as a bloody intellectual---or pseudo-intellectual---whose stories are riddled, raddled and infested with that dreaded writer's disease, introspection. He cannot trust his story as action and dialogue to convey his point. Perhaps in rebellion against his years with Marvel Comics he is now letting loose all the bottled up thoughts he couldn't get into the comicbooks.

And one last gripe: he should never have included that story of the male seeking and finally mating with a lovely 'woman' just before their all-powerful god, Ezeriah, sends down a killing gas. The viewpoint character turns out to be a Japanese beetle in mating season and the god turns out to be a gardener spraying his fruit tree, for Christ's sake! The beetle, of course, is full of thoughts about life, love, death and the Meaning Of It All.

McGregor, full of himself, thinks he has a lot to say. He comes across like a college sophomore.

DRAGONFLAME is available only from Fictioneer Books, Ltd., Road's End, Lakemont, GA 30552. Cost is $5. plus 65¢ postage and handling charge.

# I note that Andy Porter is having good success with ALGOL/STARSHIP. (As issues go by ALGOL will fade away and the new name, STARSHIP, will become the name...as ASTOUNDING metamorphosed on the covers into ANALOG.)

A lovely full-color Kelly Freas cover painting. Interior is the usual ALGOL mix of dull articles, dull interview, dull columns and advertising.

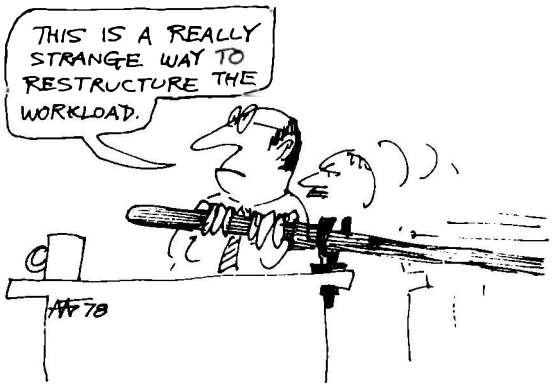
God, I'm vicious tonight.

In his editorials Andy comes across as increasingly arrogant and superior. Who needs subscribers---too much trouble! Bookstores and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

# THE HUMAN HOTLINE

## *S-F NEWS*
## BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT




And what of PULSAR? In the September 1978 LOCUS in an article on Ben Bova's comments re OMNI at Worldcon, Miriam Rodstein, an editorial part-time assistant at LOCUS, reported that "there is a rumor that PLAYBOY is planning a competitor called PULSAR".

I called up the PLAYBOY editorial offices in Chicago, was referred to their New York offices, where I spoke with Mr. Mort Persky, the new publications editor at PLAYBOY. Mr. Persky handles requests for new magazines, which the presenters hope PLAYBOY will buy. He said he looks at about 1000 such presentations in a year, of which maybe a half dozen are proposals for SF magazines. Evidently I was the first person to ask him whether PLAYBOY was in fact considering such a title.

His answer was no. He said PENTHOUSE bought out a similar notion to what has been presented to PLAYBOY. Although he did emphasize that at no time was the word PULSAR connected with any of the queries they received. He was, however, "amused to discover" that the rumored magazine was not only in a specific area "but also a title, although it is a great title". And while saying that the idea of PLAYBOY bringing out a science fiction magazine was "not unthinkable" and that "we've toyed with it before", there are still "dozens of other considerations which will never see the light" and that there are always a lot of rumors; this was the first rumor which came "ready-equipped with a title". He also mentioned displeasure with the way LOCUS dealt with this rumor, calling it "foolish".

Toward the end of our conversation he volunteered the fact that "publishing companies are always considering" new ideas for magazines. I then asked him if OMNI was a financial success, how would that affect PLAYBOY's interest in bringing out a science fiction magazine. He replied, "That's an interesting question. It is also a hard question to answer". He felt a more interesting question would be what if OMNI fails. He said he would be "much more intrigued by failure" of OMNI than its success.

We than talked about some specific observations about OMNI and how the failure of OMNI would encourage in some ways rather than discourage companies like PLAYBOY when it came to starting a large-budget SF magazine, in the sense that it would give them some parameters to operate from. Mr. Perski also commented that he felt OMNI's "visual feel in terms of artwork" is inappropriate.

And what of PULSAR, and what of PULSAR?

# Dave Hartwell has left Berkley-Putnam to go to Pocket Books. At Pocket Books Dave Hartwell and John Douglas (the assistant editor of the SF line) are planning to expand the SF program from its present 2 titles per month, to 3 in May and to 4 as soon as they have enough material. In January 1980, they will add one hardcover a month, through Simon and Schuster. The mass market edition of the hardcovers will be released around a year after the hardcover release. They are essentially looking for novels.

John Douglas, to whom I talked, mentioned that Ron Busch, the new president at Pocket Books, was the prime mover behind Pocket's decision to hire Hartwell and the attendant emphasis on SF. Mr. Busch's previous job was at Ballantine where the phenomenal success of the Del Rey imprint has gained industry-wide renown.

John Douglas has been involved in fandom since he attended the Spring, 1969, Lunacon.

Dave Hartwell has worked at NAL and Berkley before Pocket. His work at Berkley turned what had been a moribund program into one of the strongest in the SF publishing field. At Pocket he will have a large budget, the firm support of Ron Busch, cover control and contract negotiations. The old Pocket contract will not be in use any more. Mr. Hartwell has recently been involved at the Pocket Book sales conference showing their sales representatives how to best market science fiction. Everything in the Pocket line through July was purchased by previous editors. His first titles will start appearing in August, with most of the older material out by September.

# Ted White has resigned as editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC, on 11/9/78. I will try to have more details for the next issue. As of press time I had been unable to get in touch with Mr. White.

# PLAYBOY has bought the reprint rights to several Essex House SF and non-SF titles. Of special note are the two Philip Jose Farmer books.

# Calling it "an exciting American art form", Frank Mankowitz, president of National Public Radio, announced that a science fiction drama series is being prepared for the public airwaves. No starting time was mentioned. His father wrote many of the scripts for Orson Welles' Mercury Broadcast of the Air.

# Jerry E. Pournelle will be doing a short science column for ANALOG. He will still be doing a column for DESTINIES. He explains that there is no conflict involved. The ANALOG column is much shorter than the DESTINIES one, and Jim Baen, editor of DESTINIES, sees no conflict.

His last column for GALAXY is still unpaid for, as well as being unprinted. A state of affairs that Dr. Pournelle, needless to say, is not exactly thrilled about. The worst thing is the column is about fast-breaking developments in the computer field and is about six months out of date.

Dr. Pournelle also mentioned that his next novel collaboration with Larry Niven, OATH OF FEALTY, is almost done. Of their earlier collaborations, LUCIFER'S HAMMER will probably make the New York Times yearly best-seller list; MOTE IN GOD'S EYE, their first novel, continues to sell several hundred copies a month, as does INFERNO.

Remember the address for this column is: Elton T. Elliott, SFR, 1899 Wiessner Dr. N.E., Salem, OR, 97303. Phone: (503) 393-6389

# Isaac Asimov's autobiography, IN MEMORY YET GREEN, will be published in two volumes by Doubleday in February. This information courtesy Jim Wilson, Drake University.

# As an addendum to my mini-interview with Forrest J. Ackerman, the Perry Rhodan series is back. Issues #119 through #124 were printed in October by Master Publications, Van Nuys, California. For information on the series and to get the books, write: Master Publications, 13735 Victory Blvd, Suite 1, Van Nuys, CA 91401.

# Doubleday has picked up the hardcover rights to F. Paul Wilson's AN ENEMY OF THE STATE, which will detail the revolution that led to the founding of the LaNague Federation. Dell has picked up softcover rights to WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS.

# Maxim Jakubowski, consulting editor for London's Allison & Busby publishers SF line, is editing a massive anthology entitled TWENTY HOUSES OF THE ZODIAC. More on this anthology and some other information on Mr. Jakubowski provided next issue.

# OMNI magazine is reporting a million copy 100% sale of their first issue. They upped that by 300,000 for the second issue. For the third issue the print run had jumped to an astonishing 2 million copies. By the third issue we began to see the first of Ben Bova's selections. Both the Benford piece and Orson Scott Card's story were purchased by Mr. Bova.

# Roger Elwood has been fired by Peterson's Publications, where he edited the religious magazine, INSPIRATIONS. Let's hope he doesn't try to come back to SF. The anthology field is just beginning to recover.

# William Rotsler has sold a sequel to ZANDRA, to Doubleday.

# F.M. Busby has sold a 3rd book in the CAGE A MAN THE PROUD ENEMY series. He also has sold a sequel to RISSA KERGUELEN, which will be a lot shorter. Both books sold to Berkley-Putnam.

# Terry Carr is at work on a novel for Dell.

# The publishers of STARLOG are publishing an anthology edited by David Truesdale and David Gerrold. The title is SF YEARBOOK.

# Kate Wilhelm has a new novel out called JUNIPER TIME. It will be published this spring.

# Frederik Pohl is currently on a new movie entitled, COOL WAR, which should be out by the end of 1979.

# Charles Sheffield, president of the American Astronautical Society, and vice president of special projects for the Earth Satellite Corp., is setting things up so that the SFWA could be the co-sponsor at some AAS meetings. He also is writing a novel for Ace entitled THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS. Plus he will have a short story collection from Ace. I will have a mini-interview with Dr. Sheffield in an upcoming issue.

# Joe Haldeman is working on a new novel which is the first part of a projected trilogy. The tentative title is WORLDS.

**ACE NEWS:**

February:

Reginald Bretnor - THE SCHIMMELHORN FILE
(A collection of related stories)
Bob Shaw ---------- VERTIGO
(The novel sequel to his 1974 GALAXY short story "A Little Night Flying")
Fred Saberhagen--THE MASK OF THE SUN
Jack L. Chalker-----A WAR OF SHADOWS (An ANALOG book)
James H. Schmitz --- THE DEMON BREED
(This is the first of several Schmitz titles, too long out of print, that Ace will be reissuing.)
Poul Anderson ------- ENSIGN FLANDRY
(The first of the Flandry series. Also long overdue.)
Edgar Rice Burroughs-THE MONSTER MEN
Edgar Rice Burroughs----THE MAD KING

March

Donald R. Benson--AND HAVING WRIT...
(The editor of the Quantam SF series' first novel)
Ben Bova -------- THE BEST OF ANALOG
(An Analog book. This one has a beautiful Schomburg cover.)
Avram Davidson---THE KAR-CHEE REIGN/ ROGUE DRAGON
Marion Zimmer Bradley----THE FALCONS OF NARABEDLA
Lawrence Janifer-------KNAVE IN HAND (Sequel to SURVIVOR)
A. Bertram Chandler --------INTO THE ALTERNATE UNIVERSE/CONTRABAND FROM OTHERSPACE
Robert Sheckley---UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS
Andre Norton-----YEAR OF THE UNICORN
Andre Norton ---------- HIGH SORCERY

**BANTAM NEWS:**

February

Joe Haldeman ----- WORLD WITHOUT END (His last Star Trek novel)
L. Sprague de Camp & Lin Carter ---- CONAN THE LIBERATOR

March

Robert E. Howard----HILL OF THE DEAD
Frederik Brown ------ NIGHTMARES AND GEEZENSTACKS
Phyllis Gottlieb---O' MASTER CALIBAN

**BERKLEY NEWS:**

# They held a party at Berkeley, California to introduce their SF writers on the West Coast to their new editorial staff, which consists of John Silbershack and Victoria Stochet, formerly of ANALOG, and to head off any exodus from Berkley Books now that Dave Hartwell has left them.

February:

Philip Jose Farmer ---------- DARE
Frederik Turner ---- A DOUBLE SHADOW
Robert Silverburg---DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH
Richard Matheson --- SHORES OF SPACE
Jack L. Chalker--THE IDENTITY MATRIX (This is a hardcover)

March

Joanna Russ ----- PICNIC ON PARADISE
Philip Jose Farmer---INSIDE, OUTSIDE
Robert Silverberg-THE BOOK OF SKULLS
Gerald Bailey-SWORD OF THE NURLINGAS

**DAW NEWS:**

February

Tanith Lee ---------- DEATH'S MASTER
Jack Vance --------THE PALACE OF LOVE
(The 3rd novel in the Demon Prince series.)
Michael Moorcock-LORD OF THE SPIDERS
A. Betram Chandler--THE FAR TRAVELER (A Commadore Grimes tale)
A.E. Van Vogt----------SUPERMIND

March

John Norman ------- EXPLORERS OF GOR
(So far the only thing explored in this ostensible fantasy series, is the sick side of the human psyche)
Michael Moorcock--MASTERS OF THE PIT
Ron Goulart --- HELLO, LEMURIA HELLO
Hugh Walker -- MESSENGER OF DARKNESS
Isaac Asimov & Martin Greenberg ---- (Editors)----ISAAC ASIMOV PRESENTS THE GREAT SF: #1

**DELL NEWS:**

February

Diane Duane ----- THE DOOR INTO FIRE (First of a fantasy series)
Jim Frenkel (Editor)--BINARY STAR #2
Consists of----"The Twilight River" By Gordon Eklund
"The Tery" By Dr. F. Paul Wilson

March

Fletcher Pratt & L. Sprague de Camp-------LAND OF UNREASON
(Featuring the original interior illustrations by Edd Cartier.)
Bob Shaw ---------- NIGHTWALK

# We will feature some comments by Dell SF editor Jim Frenkel on Virginia Kidd's anthology MILLENIAL WOMEN, which Dell will publish in softcover in May.

DEL REY NEWS:
February
Piers Anthony ---THE SOURCE OF MAGIC
Brian Daley -- THE STAR FOLLOWERS OF CORAMONDE
(Sequel to his earlier novel, THE DOOMFARERS OF CORAMONDE)
Robert Bloch -- SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF
(A new collection)
Fritz Leiber --- THE SILVER EGGHEADS
James Tiptree, Jr.-- WARM WORLDS AND OTHERWISE
Evangeline Walton--THE ISLAND OF THE MIGHTY
March
Stephen R. Donaldson--THE POWER THAT PRESERVES
(Third in his bestselling series)
Larry Niven ---THE CONVERGANT SERIES
(Tentative title)
Robert Foster--THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO MIDDLE EARTH
Robert Silverberg ---------- THORNS
Evangeline Walton ------ WITCH HOUSE
Lawrence Manning---THE MAN WHO AWOKE

# My apologies for not including Crawford Kilian's first name in my last column and for misspelling the last name.

JOVE NEWS:
February
George R.R. Martin (Ed.)-NEW VOICES IN SF 2
Stuart Schiff ---------- WHISPER
March
E.E. "Doc" Smith ------- THE BEST OF DOC SMITH

POCKET NEWS:
February
A.E. Van Vogt -----THE WEAPON MAKERS
Max Daniels ---------- OFF WORLD
March
Jane Gaskell ---------- ATLAN
(Part 3 of a five-part series, Part I, THE SERPENT, & Part 2, THE DRAGON published by Pocket Sept. '78 & Jan. '79 respectively.)
David Dvorkin ----------GREEN GOD
(Tentative title)

SPOTLIGHT: FEATURED AUTHORS ARE —
FRANK HERBERT
JACK WILLIAMSON
GREGORY BENFORD
ORSON SCOTT CARD

FRANK HERBERT:
# His newest novel, THE JESUS INCIDENT, written with Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet Bill Ransom, will be out from Berkley/Putnam this spring. It is a sequel to DESTINATION: VOID, and it's original title was THE SHIP THAT WAS GOD. Mr. Herbert told me that Mr. Ransom suggested the idea, and that it was a better concept than what he had envisioned. He described the style as different than either his or Ransom's and that Dave Hartwell was unable to figure out which parts were his and which were Ransom's. He said this was the easiest collaboration he had ever done.

# About the SF boom: "I think it is going to last. Because SF gives more elbow room to work in, it allows a broader stroke. I believe it's going to take over."

# He is about ready to start on DUNE 4.

# For the next several months, however, he is busy writing for Hollywood. Next issue I will present a mini-interview with Frank Herbert, where he will discuss the visual media's impact on SF and his reaction to the movie industry.

JACK WILLIAMSON:
# Mr. Williamson will be featured in my March GALAXY column.

# His new novel BROTHER TO DEMONS, BROTHER TO GODS will be published by Bobbs-Merril this spring.

# A sequel to THE HUMANOIDS, titled TEN TRILLION WISE MACHINES will be published by Bantam.

# A new Legion of Space novel, QUEEN OF THE LEGION, has been purchased by Pocket Books.

# A sequel to THE FARTHEST STAR, written in collaboration with Frederik Pohl, has been planned and sold to Del Rey Books; it's title will be WALL AROUND A STAR.

GREGORY BENFORD:
# He is bringing to completion a novel which he has worked on for the last five years; no title as yet.

# The short story that appeared in OMNI's third issue, was written with Mark Laidlaw, who is a first year student at the University of Oregon. Laidlaw broached the concept to Mr. Benford who liked it; they wrote it and it sold for whatever generous sum OMNI is paying.

# His novel, IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT is in its second printing.

# His latest novel, THE STARS IN SHROUD, sold out its 5,000-copy first edition in less than two months. The British hardcover rights have sold to Gollanz for $3,000.

ORSON SCOTT CARD:
# Has sold a novel to Dell Books, MIKAL'S SONGBIRD. The short story that the novel is based on has been nominated for a Nebula.

# CAPITOL, a themed short story collection, from Ace in January. It will include stories that have appeared this fall in OMNI ("A Thousand Deaths", Dec.); ANALOG ("Lifeloop", "Killing Children" and "Breaking the Game", Oct, Nov., and Jan.); and DESTINIES ("Second Chance", Jan/Feb). Six other stories in the collection will be appearing for the first time.

# A PLANET CALLED TREASON, a novel from St. Martin's Press, probably in February. Pan Books has just bought the British Commonwealth rights for £4500.

# HOT SLEEP from Baronet Books in April. Also a novel, it, like CAPITOL, is an ANALOG book and will later come out in paperback from Ace.

CONCLUDING WORDS:

Well, I can't vouch for anybody else but I've been paid for my first two columns at GALAXY. Let's see, at 1¢ a word and a 750-word column, I'm losing money when you consider the outrageous prices the phone company charges for long distance phone calls. But, oh, well ----

It has come to my attention that some naive people believe that I have been skimming issues of LOCUS for my information. For those of you out there who might be wondering, I would like to remind you of several factors: First of all, LOCUS has a time lag of one month, here at SFR I have a time lag of twice that much, and that margin will even be greater for my GALAXY column, so when it appears that I've cribbed from Charlie Brown all that has actually happened is that he's got his news into print faster than I have. Another thing to consider: LOCUS is a news magazine, "The Human Hotline" is a news column; therefore, our format dictates certain differences and emphasis.

Every single word in this issue is information personally garnered by myself. The PULSAR affair was first mentioned in LOCUS, which is the only quasi-exception.

However, lest you believe this is an attack on LOCUS, let me take this space to publicly say what a good job Charlie Brown has done over the years. LOCUS is a fine magazine. I look forward to every issue.

# *Interview With Hank Stine*

ELLIOTT: How is the situation regarding the payment of authors?

STINE: Well, to correct any doubt that might exist about GALAXY's payment policy, we pay on acceptance, meaning when the issue is sent to the setters. The vouchers are sent out, and 2 to 3 weeks after that the checks should reach the writers. All the writers, by the way, have gotten checks for the first issue.

ELLIOTT: How are you going to restore the credibility of GALAXY?

STINE: The fact that all the authors in the first issue have been paid is a start. We are also addressing the past payments, which have been in arrears, and are making some headway there. I believe the drastic solution of lowering the word-rate has worked, at least as far as the first issue: We will be talking to the SFWA about the back monies.

ELLIOTT: Why has GALAXY not been out since August? (The issue was Volume 39 #7, and listed on the contents page as the September issue. This question was asked December 1.)

STINE: According to the printer, half of the next shipment was, due to a computer error, misplaced on a railroad car. What happened was the computer lost the railroad car that the shipment was on.

ELLIOTT: That really sounds suspicious?

STINE: That is according to the printer, not according to UPD.

ELLIOTT: Now to the famous question: Who is Hank Stine?

STINE: I've been a fan since I was old enough to read. I started with the Oz books, and by the time I was 12, I was going through the Winston Juveniles as well as reading books by early favorites of mine like E.E. Smith, Hamilton, Brackett, Williamson, ERB, Asimov, Heinlein, etc.

I started many APAs and read about 100% of all the SF novels that were published from the late 20s through 1964 or 65. I would read 3 or 4 action-oriented pulps a day from the time I was 14 through the early twenties. However, the replication of plot-cliche bothered me more as I read more.

ELLIOTT: So then recently you've been reading very little?

STINE: Yes. I think a lot of the plots in SF need reworking. So many of them are flawed psychologically/sociologically and scientifically (in very serious ways) that it's laughable.

For a good example of what I call broken-back science fiction, look at Michael G. Coney's FRIENDS COME IN BOXES. The premise is that there're so many people on Earth that the newly-born children have to stay, bodiless, in boxes until somebody dies. Even if all the non-Catholics died, even Catholics, or any person would rather practice birth control than have their child's brain put in a box. The entire book is totally ridiculous. It's akin to the old "epics" where the Moon's surface was covered with green cheese.

ELLIOTT: Actually, isn't the preponderance of stodgy, unimaginative backgrounds coupled with a dearth of genuinely new ideas, the real problem with current SF, rather than old plots? What I term nostalgia for yesterday's tomorrow.

STINE: Yes. A lot of people who write SF go through school, graduate, then write. They don't garner enough experience with different physical/cultural climates or events. And because SF has been outside, or ghettoized, in our culture, they haven't spent time in the society of regular folks. The only thing they know when they begin to write is the SF stories they have read.

What I want to say is there are two ways of writing adventure fiction. The first is the person who gets out in the society and lives. The second is the armchair writer, who gets his knowledge of the world through books.

There are two ways the second category of writers can go. They can rewrite poorly old books, or they can rewrite old books with some new stuff thrown in.

A lot of half-assed SF gets printed because an editor has to print 6 books or get fired. Remember a person can read a book in 3 hours, while it takes a writer 3 months to write the very same book. So there's a large demand.

ELLIOTT: What sort of stories will you run in GALAXY?

STINE: Although J.J. Pierce did a good job in finding new writers, my emphasis will be on the established names. However, there will be one new writer in each issue. There will also be two serials in every issue, one a little heavier in tone than the other. GALAXY will be oriented towards a wide spectrum of readers. There will be action-adventure stories beside heavy "think" pieces. Everybody will like and hate something in each issue. I want the magazine to be accessible to the non-SF person, but sophisticated enough for any SF readers. Examples of SF that do this include GATEWAY, DUNE, BUG JACK BARRON and the writings of Anne McCaffrey and Poul Anderson.

To answer several questions before they're asked:

First of all my feelings about running a Star Wars-type cover, or any other exploitative cover: I did feel rather guilty about it, until I realized that Asimov's has used Star Wars on the cover 6 times in the last year; I've only used it once.

Secondly, my working relationship with Arnold Abramson: I've found him to be a man of honor who has lived up to every single agreement we've had so far. What it is, is that some people relate better and that has nothing to do with moral worth or professional ability.

Finally, when it came to the reporting of information about GALAXY, your column is the only place that reported everything correctly.

ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Stine.

GALAXY NEWS:

# UPD, publishers of GALAXY, have been approached by someone who wants to buy GALAXY. According to Hank, they're pretty far apart on terms. This particular party was originally interested in AMAZING and FANTASTIC but opted to try for GALAXY instead, because GALAXY is a more distinguished name than AMAZING.

And although this is all rather iffy at this stage, Hank said that he would stay through the transition period, if they would want to bring in new people, to make the transition as smooth as possible. Of course, if they want no changes he would, needless to say, stay on. In any event, if this did happen, it would not be until 4 or 5 months past next March, that's at the earliest.

They would probably want to change the magazine's format to large size. But Hank has been talking to Abramson about changing the format to large size anyway, since Hank believes that's the way of the future for SF magazines.

# Hank is also discussing with Abramson the possibilities of bringing out IF again. In this reincarnation, IF would become a magazine devoted to heroic fiction with Conan-type covers. Also on the discussion board are a yearly anthology a la ASIMOV'S yearly offering, and a magazine which Hank terms very revolutionary in concept.

# GALAXY has taken on a reviewer of talking SF records. The reviewer is among the many people who receive GALAXY in its Braille edition. Hank describes the person as very perceptive, and has worked things out so that CAEDMON will be sending their

records for review.

# The assistant editor for GALAXY is Ken Hedberg, who was very active in early 60's West Coast fandom. Hank describes Mr. Hedburg as doing a great job.

GALAXY: HANK'S FIRST ISSUE
(Scheduled for end of Feb.)

(Because of space considerations, I can't bring you most of Hank's comments on these stories. I hope to present some of his comments in a future issue along with a regular-sized interview.)

Serial, Part 3 ---------- GEM
By Frederik Pohl
Serial, Part 1 ------- STAR WARRIORS
By Jesse Peel
(Hank calls this the best story of this type since Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett)
Short Novel --- BENEATH THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE
By Jane Gallion
Novelette ---------- "The Psychic"
(First in a series) By Peter Martin
Novelette ---"Femworld: Before the Revolution"
By A.E. Van Vogt
(Excerpt from his upcoming novel from Pocket Books)
Short Stories:---- "An End to Crime"
By Ed Ludwig
(Used to write for AMAZING, most recently for Cele Goldsmith)
-- "When the Metal-Eaters Came"
By David Bunch (A Modern story.
(One promised for almost every issue)
-- "The Super-Duper-Make-Your-Own-Baby-In-a-Test-Tube-Gang"
(A first sale) By Guyanne Kucera
FEATURES:
(Comments exclusively by ETE, Hank should assume no responsibility.)
Book Reviews ---- By Richard E. Geis
(And what of Alter?)
SF Hotline: Books --Elton T. Elliott
(Ah, sweet ego-boo, how we thrive on it)
Movies ---------- Bill Warren
Editorial ---------- By Hank Stine
(There'll be an editorial in every issue, the first is on a writer who is the most overpublicized author in the field.)

HANK'S SECOND ISSUE
(For end of March)

Serial, Part 4 ---------- GEM
By Frederik Pohl
Serial, conclusion --- STAR WARRIORS
By Jesse Peel
Short Novel--THE INVASION OF AMERICA
By Gil Lamont
Novelettes: ----------"The Sex War"
By Norman Spinrad
(Excerpt from the upcoming novel, THE MIND GAME from Jove)
-- "The Depression of 1980"
By Ed Ludwig
Short Stories:
(No Title)------By Edward Wellen
(Another Modern Tale)-By David Bunch
(Final Short)--By George A. Effinger

FEATURES:
Science News-Type Column ----------
By Greg Chalkin
(Will be news-oriented)
An ESP Column -- Writer has not been named
Plus interviews with a scientist, SF writer, or somebody involved in the SF movie/TV industry.

HANK'S THIRD ISSUE
(End of April?)

Serial, Part 5 ---------- GEM
By Frederik Pohl
Serial, Part 1 ---------- PUNK WORLD
By Peter Martin
(Hank describes this as a ball-breaker of a novel)
Short Novel-CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FOURTH KIND
By Jane Gallion
(UFO story to end all UFO stories)
Novelette ---- By George R.R. Martin
(No title given)
Short Stories --- Undecided upon yet

Hank has on hand material by Charles V. DeVet and a story by Astrid Anderson (daughter of Poul Anderson) and Dorothy Jones.

Plus there could be an Alter in the Book Review column's future.

**********

SMALL PRESS NOTES CONTINUED

newsstands are where the money is!

There' s a new news/market reports/commentary section in ALGOL starting this issue [Winter 1978-1979].

Richard Lupoff has taken to writlong, analytical reviews of sf novels of late, and it is a mistake. He is more valuable doing his 100-300 word "Briefly Noted" reviews. But the temptation a writer cannot resist is extended commentary on other writers' writing styles and technical command of theme, story and such. Lupoff isn't any better at resisting temptation than I am.

I won't give ALGOL's address and subscription info, as I have in the past, since Andy Porter, editor and publisher, isn't too keen on new subscribers. Look for ALGOL/STARSHIP in local sf bookstores. Be prepared to pay $2.25 for a copy.

# TESSERACT SCIENCE FICTION (#2) is that which experienced fan editors have been warning beginning fan editors against for generations---a magazine devoted to "amateur" stories.

Except...two of the stories in this issue are good enough to be in most prozines (with a bit of touch-up work here and/or there).

The first two stories are strictly clumsyville---inept professional technique.

But "True To Form" by David Castlewitz is a really good look at the ruthlessness of society in creating, using and weeding out defective clones.

And "Listen To the Rain" by Al Sirois is an acceptable story of human/computer linkage and the pressures involved in finding habitable worlds for mankind--especially when failure has extremely personal consequences.

Phil Foglio's full-color oil-painting cover seems splotchy and unrefined. He has a way to go in technical skills.

Robert Garcia, Managing Editor of TESSERACT, writes that they are paying 1/2¢ per word for fiction, and $5. per page for art portfolios. But, peculiarly, he says they are not yet paying for artwork used to illustrate the stories.

Best write for up-to-date info to: TESSERACT SF, 134 Windward Dr., Schaumburg, IL 60194.

TESSy costs $1.00 per copy.

# Received close to deadline is a new, deluxe, hardcover collection of Fritz Leiber stories, HEROES AND HORRORS, published by Whispers Press and edited by Stuart Schiff.

What we have here are nine of Fritz's best illustrated by ten full-page Time Kirk drawings and a full-color Tim Kirk dust jacket. Plus an Introduction by John Jakes.

This is a clothbound book, folk, with the best paper. And a limited edition. And worth the $12.00 asked for an unsigned copy. If you want Fritz's autograph a copy of the book costs $25.00. Since Fritz Leiber's work and reputation will probably rise head and shoulders over all the 'great' sf writers of now, the signed copy might end up being worth thousands in a hundred years. You buy these for your kids' kids estate. And to show appreciation for Fritz's great writing.

Send to: Whispers Press, Box 1492-W, Azalea St., Browns Mills, NJ 08015.

# I want to mention a Donald M. Grant hardcover edition of Robert E. Howard's Solomon Kane writings, titled RED SHADOWS. And featuring full-color paintings (9) throughout the 337-page book. This is a valuable, first-quality volume. $20.00 from Donald M. Grant, Publisher, West Kingston, RI 02892.

**********

A BON MOT IS A CHOCOLATE-COVERED PHRASE DESIGNED TO LEAVE AN AFTER-TASTE IN THE MIND.

like to believe that serious fans will eventually discover that literature offers more than the visual media does. It will be interesting to see, however, if the number of filmcons rises sharply in the next decade.'

*((Many people see a 'sea-change' in the move to basics in schools now, to the point of requiring proof of ability to read, write and figure to a certain level of competency before graduation.*

*((Thus will written sf and fandom be saved. We hope.*

*((I remain convinced that the combination of a depression and advanced micro-electronics/computers will revolutionize virtually every aspect of our society and culture in the next ten years. It's really true that 'The Future Isn't What It Used To Be.'))*

12-11-78 This will probably be the last entry this issue. I have to make up the contents page, add page numbers, and send this issue off to the printers...hopefully by tomorrow afternoon.

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NEXT ISSUE: Interviews with NORMAN SPINRAD, JOAN D. VINGE, STEPHEN R. DONALDSON and perhaps FRANK HERBERT.

"On The Edge Of Futuria" by Ray Nelson.

"Science Fiction On Film On Paper" by Wayne Keyser.

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# I have a lot of public service bits here....and news....

JERRY POURNELLE is putting together an anthology titled THE SURVIVAL OF FREEDOM, using fiction and non-fiction. For further details write him at: 12051 Laurel Terrace Dr., Studio City, CA 91604.

BANTAM will publish Jacqueline Susann's first (unpublished) novel this spring. YARGO, written in 1956, is described as a 'space-age love story -- a fantastic romantic adventure set on the earth and exotic distant planets.'

POSTCARDS FROM PROVIDENCE: A FILM PORTRAIT OF H.P. LOVECRAFT is being made now in Providence, RI. Paul and Marc Michaud are the producers. It is a French-American effort. Lovecraft is a cult figure in France. His books have sold over 2 million copies.

NEW WORLDS---Britain's notorious speculative magazine is back (See the Mike Moorock interview this issue for the full story) with a radical new policy as far beyond the "new wave" as the "new wave" was from 1950s SF. 'Complete coverage of the future' by Moorcock, Spinrad, Platt, Bayley, et.al. Sample copy $1.50 payable to Patchin Productions Rm. 718, 41 Union Square, New York, NY 10003.

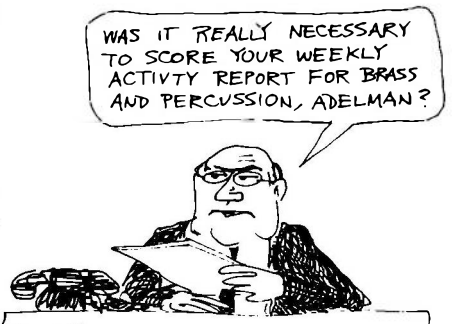
WILLIAM F. NOLAN has completed a screenplay of his novel SPACE FOR HIRE for Triton Productions.

He has signed for a third 'Logan' novel, LOGAN'S SEARCH, to be published by Bantam in the fall of this year (1979).

ASIMOV'S ADVENTURE #3 will contain novelets by Roger Zelazny and Samuel R. Delany. The latter is an independent episode from a book, THE TALES OF NEVERYON.

I think it would be appropriate for proud authors to send news of their many sales and such to Elton Elliott for inclusion in his news column. His address in on page 58.

I just received a review of Mike Moorcock's new fantasy, GLORIANA. William Gibson says it is the year's best fantasy. Full text next issue.





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THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 Interview with Fritz Leiber; "The Literary Dreamers" by James Blish; "Irvin Binkin Meets H.P. Lovecraft" by Jack Chalker.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 Interview with R.A. Lafferrty; "The Trenchant Bludgeon" by Ted White; "Translations from the Editorial" by Marion Z. Bradley.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #8 "Tomorrow's Libido: Sex and Science Fiction" by Richard Delap; "The Trenchhant Bludgeon" by Ted White; "Banquet Speech" by Robert Bloch; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #9 "Reading Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei and Cory Panshin; "Written to a Pulp!" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; "The Shaver Papers" by Richard S. Shaver.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #10 An Interview with Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest of Strange and Wonderful Birds" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's Guest Of Honor speech; The Heinlein Reaction.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #11 Interview with Avram Davidson; "The Foundation On Sands" by John J. Alderson; "Footnotes To Fan History" by Larry Shaw.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #14 Interview with Philip Jose Farmer; "Thoughts On Logan's Run" by William F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #15 Interview with L. Sprague de Camp; "Spec-Fic and the Perry Rhodan Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson; "Uffish Thots" by Ted White.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16 Interview with Jerry Pournelle; "The True and Terrible History of Science Fiction" by Barry Malzberg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; "The Literary Masochist" by Richard Lupoff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17 Interview with George R. R. Martin; Interview with Robert Anton Wilson; "Philip K. Dick: A Parallax View" by Terrence M. Green; "Microcosmos" by R. Faraday Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 Interview with Lester del Rey; Interview with Alan Burt Akers; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; "A Short One for the Boys in the Back Room" by Barry Malzberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19 Interview with Philip K. Dick; Interview with Frank Kelly Freas; "The Notebooks of Mack Sikes" by Larry Niven; "Angel Fear" by Freff; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 Interviews with Theodore Sturgeon and Joe Haldeman; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; "The Gimlet Eye" by John Gustafson.

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