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PROFILE: *LARRY NIVEN*



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A PROFILE OF CHARLES PLATT
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ALIEN THOUGHTS BY THE EDITOR

CHICON IV SENT ME MY HUGO AT LAST

I was beginning to think Mike Glycer had shot the horses and burned the stagecoach in which it was journeying from there to here. But William Leininger sent it parcel post, and for over \$5. the postal service put it on a fast train...I think.

It's a most handsome Hugo, I must say, and gleams with an impressive phallic glow of polished nickel in spaceship form.

Thanks again to all who nominated me and voted for me. I'll humbly try to gag you all to the max with brilliant and wise fan writing now and in the future.

GLEANINGS FROM PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

I subscribed in November and received my first copy in early December. Here are some items of interest to sf readers and writers.

'Pocket Books president Ron Busch charged that pressure by "authors, agents, paper sheiks, wholesalers and retailers" has led to a critical situation for mass market publishers.'

'In the last year, he noted, four of the 12 mass market publishing companies have either disappeared or been absorbed by larger firms. "In the next six months," Busch predicted, "at least one more house and possibly three will be gone."

[Word of mouth is that those three are Dell, Avon, and possibly Signet/NAL.] 12-3-82

William P. McGivern, long-time pulp writer and lately known best as a mystery/detective writer, dies of cancer November 18, 1982 at his home in Palm Desert, CA. He was 60.

I knew him best for his 1940s and 1950s sf stories. 12-3-82

An announcement from John and Beatrice Alexandra Shirley arrived announcing the birth of their twins, two boys: BYRON JOHN and PERRY FRANCIS. Born the morning of September 14, 1982 in Ollioules, France.

Congratulations John and Beatrice.

Received a letter from an American woman in Italy who wishes to know if I publish science fiction and if not, who [addresses please]



does in the U.S.A. She enclosed a one-page synopsis of two proposed stories about two young women who travel in time and "get out of the most incredible fixes."

Not enclosed was any return postage.

I cannot respond to this kind of amateur. These types ask one to perform, gratis, time-consuming tasks which can and should be performed by the amateur; there are writers magazines which specialize in market reports, addresses, etc.

This young woman got SFR's address somewhere and decided to let me do her work for her.

From the skill-level and word-choices in her synopses, I'd say she hasn't a prayer of selling her stories to anyone.

All editors and publishers receive Dumb Letters from Dumb Amateurs. Professional writers receive their share of letters from unthinking, Dumb Amateurs if the pro is unfortunate enough to have his address known to the general public. It's a hazard of the trade. A certain amount of this sort of thing goes with the territory.

I choose to swear and curse and not respond.

I do respond to Smart Amateurs, however, who are considerate.

AUTHOR SERVICES SENT SFR A PUFF package promoting L. Ron Hubbard's monster-size new sf novel, BATTLEFIELD EARTH. Their letterhead is impressively embossed and gilt on heavy tan paper. Fred M. Harris addresses SFR thus:

'Because you are one of the important opinion leaders in field of science fiction, we were asked by Mr. L. Ron Hubbard to seek your advice in making known his new Science Fiction Book, BATTLEFIELD EARTH, which is arriving in all major bookstores now by their demand.'

'During these first days of publication, the book is becoming a runaway best seller. It has already gained for the author the Golden Scroll Award of Merit.'

Fred goes on to say that BATTLEFIELD EARTH is on its 3rd house printing in as many weeks, and he asserts that the novel is spearheading a new drive to bring millions of new readers "into the Science Fiction Field." So, therefore, it "pays every SF fan and author to get behind it."

Sure. We get behind it and push the \$24 book and L. Ron Hubbard gets the profit.

Has anyone ever heard of the Golden Scroll Award of Merit?

If anyone wishes to give Mr. Harris advice, the address of AUTHOR SERVICES, INC. is: 6464 Sunset Blvd., Suite 900, Hollywood, CA 90028.

Oh, I notice on an accompanying brochure that the Golden Scroll Award of Merit was awarded by the Academ of Science Fiction and Horror. Interesting name. Real Hollywood thinking.

I HAVE RAILED MIGHTILY AGAINST free verse in Small Press Notes this issue, and from that you might think I'd never, ever publish any of that stuff in SFR. However, I admire vivid writing, bizarre imagery, wild thinking that somehow just might make sense if approached just so....

So, in this issue, and in subsequent issues, you'll stumble across some surrealist free verse by a local poet/madman name of Blake Southfork. Make of it what you will.

A SHORT INTERVIEW WITH ALTER EGO

"Hi, Geis."

Gasp! Who said that?

"Me, Alter. Your long lost mind-mate."

Shudder W-what are you doing back in my mind?

"Ummm, just visiting. Slumming. Wondering what you've been up to."

I've been happy while you've been gone, Alter. Let's keep it that way, please.

"Oh, don't worry. I've found a far, far better mind to stay with. I was just...curious. I sort of miss the old synapse collection.

You have the oddest synapses, Geis.
Errr...thanks, I think.

"They bring a good price on the used synapse market, by the way. And yours are unique--sort of half-baked on one side and underfired on the other, and a lovely purple in color. Quite striking."

Uhhh. Who are you tormenting now? Any body I know?

"No. I can tell you I was in your cat, Kookie, for a few weeks. But that was just for rest and recuperation. I had a ball tickling her little brain into constantly jumping up on your desk and sitting exactly on the copy you were typing, or smack on the book or manuscript you were reading."

Aha! I wondered----

"And I loved bugging Elton when he visited you by trying to leap onto his lap for a fine deposit of cat hairs. Pity he kept pushing me away."

Elton reads cat minds. Some people's minds, too.

"Well, I did it so often with Kookie I divine now she's kept it up all this time since I left her."

Thanks a lot!

"My pure pleasure. See you around, Geis. Got to get back to my unknowing host."

Can't you give me a hint who it is?

"Wellllll... It's...he's a very influential man. But I don't think I'll stay with him too much longer. I'm getting so I hate the taste of jellybeans."

SEXUAL FREEDOM IS A MYTH, OF COURSE, in the true sense, because underlying the surface of tolerance among Liberals lies the old, unrepentant sex-is-sin, sex-is-evil Christian attitudes which have stained European and American civilization from the beginning.

There are always impulses and trends toward greater sexual freedom and rationality, but the results are always warped and distorted by the sick Christian anti-sex morality that permeates our society and culture.

The Liberals use these anti-sex attitudes and feelings (unconsciously) to buttress and assist their drives for power and control and empires.

They have made *C*H*I*L*D*R*E*N* especially the vehicle for their need to control society and promote their class wealth. Children are to be protected from all experience or knowledge of adult sex. Children must be protected from violence of all kinds. Children especially must be protected from work and the cold realities of adult life. Somehow, children are supposed to live in a soft, warm, insulated, protected

THE LAST VICTORIAN: STANTON A. COBLENTZ

(Aug. 24, 1896 -- Sept. 6, 1982)

He was an Atlantean seer decades ago
In "science fiction," though he'd not yet heard the word:
In poetry his fantasies would flow
Ecstatic toward the stars. A stellar, lyric bird.
Then...Armageddon's shadow seemed to grow
And cloud his verse. He warned---but was unheard.

---Steve Eng

cocoon till---about 15 or 16 years of age?

That's the theory. That's the New Liberal Morality. A precious golden age of security and fun and innocence before they have to face the cold cruel world.

This says volumes about the Liberal and Christian psyche.

It also helps that whole government departments, millions of people, are required to monitor society, seek out children who are deprived of this nirvana, spend billions helping them, punishing those guilty of depriving the precious children of their unwritten right to a golden-age, and constantly publicizing the "molestation" and "abuse" uncovered in order to alert children of their "rights" and to alert (and instruct) neurotic and psychotic adults in the self-punishments and inspired crime.

All the publicity and uproar over cases of child abuse is mostly the Liberals, the professional bleeding hearts, the government employees involved, seeking to convince society their jobs and services are necessary and of value. All the TV-movies and documentaries and features in newspapers and magazines accomplish is more unenforceable laws, the desired discovery of more work [and the hiring of more social workers, more salary increases].

The children are in fact (under the pious words and crocodile tears) being shamelessly exploited by a class of college-educated parasites who have a vested interest in creating a need for their services.

They have to maintain those precious case loads. They have to have child abuse cases! And under all the piety and cant lies a vicious self interest in "processing" children and adult "offenders" in an endless series of hearings, judgements, treatments, foster homes, etc., which require an endless series of reports, conferences, meetings, appearances, trips, sessions, testimony... This whole apparatus, from the Juvenile Court judges on down to the file clerks (to say nothing of the professions who are used by and covertly and nakedly support and grow fat

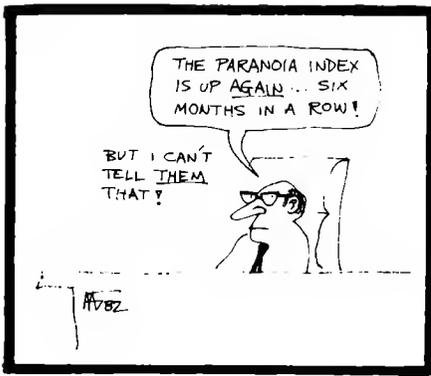
off the System--like the thousands of psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists, extra police, etc.) is terrified their con game will be exposed. They exert tremendous effort in laying Guilt Trips on society.

More than one psychiatrist/psychologist [not sucking the teat of govt./juvenile services] has observed that all the interventions and "Oh, my God, what has been done to you!" treatment by The System does more harm to the child than an undisturbed, unnoticed abuse, and often traumatizes and marks and warps the adult/parents involved as well to a degree beyond that of a family dustup or divorce over the matter.

In essence, the Liberal do-gooders are in the business of destroying lives in order to save them, in order to assure continuation of their salaries and status.

The truth is that there is always going to be some incest, some beating of children----a certain number of cases which society must handle. Society always has done so, in the past, and always will. Relatives intervened, the church inter-





vened, the police intervened. There were [still are] private organizations which aid battered and abused children.

What we didn't have in 1982, say, was a vast army of highly paid middle-class hypocrites, or self-deluded, self-serving do-gooders on the public payroll manufacturing work for themselves. And stretching out and over-processing that work. They are all very conscientious in assuring everyone involved the full protection of rights--from the child to the parents, requiring, again, endless paperwork, hearings, visits, conferences...

This vast overlay of protective government is a scam to employ and keep employed the vast armies of college graduates which have been churned out of the education system [another self-serving, hypocritical scam designed to feed off the taxpayer] since the end of World War II

This Child Protection racket is only one of the scams in operation, of course. Women and Wife protection is another classic case, along with protecting against Racism, Discrimination, Environmental Protection.... Welfare is the biggest employer of middle class college graduates, I imagine.

All these huge numbers of government employees, and the "progressive" programs they serve and protect, are mostly the creatures of surpluses created by the industrial revolution and the post-WWII boom in America and Europe.

As the boom continues to wither and die, the surpluses will shrink, the armies of social servants will have to be cut back more and more.

It is fashionable to say that we are now a service economy, and that basic smokestack industries are old-hat, old-fashioned, and not required anymore.

Bullshit. All wealth comes from the ground. ALL WEALTH COMES FROM THE GROUND. Our food, our shelter, our energy comes from or is made

possible by the acquiring or processing of materials or vegetation from the ground. That is primary. Otherwise we'd be a nation of hairy primates living by picking each other free of lice and twigs and fleas. [But even in that society somebody would have to dig up roots and catch fish and kill animals once in a while.]

The higher the technological civilization, the greater the exploitation and use of raw materials and vegetation, the greater the surpluses which can be enjoyed.

It's too bad those surpluses are stolen from the producers by (in the beginning) priesthoods, and later by overlords, governments and bureaucracies.

All these parasite classes use lies and manipulation and force to keep themselves in power. We have always had these bloodsuckers and we always will. That is the pattern, the structures, the nature of man in the mass.

The individual man [and woman!] can see these mechanisms, patterns, structures, and either minimize their harm to him, or use them to his advantage.

A little government is necessary; a lot of it is a racket. The government rackets are worse than the Mafia, because at least the Mafia provides services and products some people want and are willing to pay for.

SIGH This is a long way from what I started out to write, which was a short editorial on the new DARK FORCES series to be issued by Bantam beginning March 1, 1983.

The release says:

"Dark Forces," a new fiction series dealing with the supernatural for readers ages 12-up, will be launched in early 1983 with the publication of four titles. Each of the \$1.95 paperbacks focuses on teenage boys and girls tempted into the unknown and often evil world of the occult, bringing sinister consequences. They become trapped by the forces they release.

'The four launch titles are THE GAME by Les Logan, MAGIC SHOW by Laurie Bridges and Paul Alexander, THE DOLL by Rex Sparger and DEVIL WIND by Laurie Bridges and Paul Alexander. Among the subjects explored in the series are sorcery, possession, witchcraft and communion with evil powers. Four more "Dark Forces" titles will be published in July.

"Booksellers tell us that teenagers make up the largest single group buying books on the occult and the supernatural," reports Ron Buehl, Vice President and Editorial Director/Books for Young Readers. "Until now, teens interested in oc-

cult fiction would most likely turn to such books as The Exorcist and the V.C. Andrews trilogy, with all their explicit sex and violence, to satisfy their curiosity. In 'Dark Forces,' we've created stories as suspenseful and terrifying as their adult counterparts but have eliminated the more suggestive aspects."

If these books were aimed at adults who were expected to buy them for their teenage sons and daughters, I could understand the no-sex dictum, but these are aimed at teenagers themselves---the same teenagers who crowd into movies to see excessive sex & violence horror/occult films. And who have read THE EXORCIST, the Andrews trilogy, the King novels.

Why should the kids buy toned-down, de-sexed novels once they've read and seen the adult level occult material? These Bantam DARK FORCES books will be about teenagers involved in the occult, and that identification factor might help, but...

The unspoken calculation here, I think, is that these novels are expected to sell mostly to teenage girls, who might not relish the stronger stuff. And in fact the covers of these four books show teenage girls as the main figure, either as witch/sorceress or as victim.

The publisher/editors are willing to risk the wrath of the fundamentalist religious groups on the matter of leading girls and boys to the devil, but not in the matter of realistic sex.

There you have a naked example of our morality/value system in commercial publishing. Sex is still anathema for children. Adults have so many sexual hangups and sexual unhappiness and frustration (partly because of sexual curiosity and



frustration and lies imposed on them as children) that they unwittingly contribute to the perpetuation of that children-must-be-innocent-of-sex wish/rule imposed by sex-fearing, sex-is-power religious forces.

The exploitation of sex in our society even extends to the despicable carrot-on-a-stick technique, used by all the media and collaborated with by the religionists---another scam, another racket. They wash each others' hands to keep sex front and center---just out of reach. That way they all make money or power off it. They need each other.

I don't condemn Bantam in this. They're only trying to make a buck by giving a reader group what they hope that reader group will buy. Bantam didn't make the rules. The gold goes to those who best understand the reality of what's going on and who best use that understanding.

Christ, I'm sounding a lot like an idealist! I slip into that horrible mode of thinking occasionally. I usually climb out and reassert my healthy cynicism and realism. I do not really oppose or want to change The Way Things Are, or want to alter Human Nature. Therein lies battering your head against stone walls and self-righteousness and the-end-justifies-the-means and in-the-public-interest thinking. Before you know it you're into this-is-for-your-own-good thinking.

I'll leave for others the implications of the fact that apparently teenagers are the largest single group who buy books on the occult and the supernatural. Are they also buying a lot of fantasy? Does this signify a flight from the real world, science, the depression?

AFTERTHOUGHT: I'm a bit disturbed that as a result of the last few years' feminist activism and liberal propaganda, men have been painted as the primary evil in this society, and probably in the world.

It is men who mostly abuse children. It is men who rape and beat wives. It is men who do 99% of the crime. It is men who lead countries into wars. It is men who love guns. It is men who seem to love combat and seek solutions in violence.

The implicit message is how nice and perfect the world would be were it not for MEN!

And males, especially in this country, are loaded with guilt and humiliation for wanting sex! Why, men are the new niggers. And there is nothing worse than being a young, black, heterosexual man.

And I wonder if this state of belief/propaganda isn't inherently asked from a well-integrated society? Is advanced, high-tech civilization structurally hostile to the instinctual needs/nature of masculinity? Are males best suited for a 1850s society and culture than a 2050s world?

If true, then the space frontier is a critical necessity for mankind. Because it is quite possible that unless society makes room for masculine drives and needs and recognizes and admires masculine traits, those traits will be genetically engineered out of the species "for the good of society". And, ironically, it will be men who will do the job on the species, trying to eliminate those 10% who are misfits, sociopaths, etc. in future generations.

The only other possibility is an eventual worldwide disaster [or slow devolution of technology] which would bring the survival value of basic masculine nature to the fore.

CHANGE

Change sits on a wheel - ever brooding - ever staring out across the river bright of tiny gondolas huddled next to huge gray looming battleships.

Change sits on a veranda silently pirouetting - looking out across the fields of broken clay and molten lava splashed mauve, crimson and vermilion littered with bones, a broken axe, a spent missile.

Change lolls in the meadow breathing the sweet pungent air listening to the soft chirping, twitter of swallows swooping and diving across the glade, while nearby a group of shirtless men haul two large oblong rectangles into position.

Change leans against a tree while the quiet of the glade is shattered, extirpated by crowds of mental lepers yelling ill-understood dirges.

Change smiles under skies once blue then magenta, now blue again.

---BLAKE SOUTHFORK

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THE PROBLEM IS RELATIVE VALUES

to SFR readers, of reviews of say 25 books as opposed to a listing/review/notes/comments combination as I'm resuming [after years] in SFR this issue, of over 100 books.

Whether it's better to have reviews of a relative few books, or

ALIEN THOUGHTS IS CONTINUED IN
"ALIEN CONCLUSIONS" ON PAGE 63

JOHN SLADEK

"People have laughed at all great inventors and discoverers," John Sladek points out. "They laughed at Galileo, at Edison's light bulb and even at nitrous oxide." In SF novels he himself has invented a world-dominating mechanical horde, a man tragically converted to computer tape, a naive robot who's lynched when mistaken for a black. And what was the callous world's response? That's right. They laughed.

John Sladek was born in Iowa in 1937, that year which is the futuristic goal of a time-traveler in his lunatic story "1937 A.D.!" After studying first mechanical engineering and then English literature at the University of Minnesota, he went on to "take up the series of jobs which usually characterize writers and other malcontents -- short-order cook, technical writer, railroad switchman, cowboy, President of the United States." He left the U.S.A. to spend time lurking in Morocco, Spain and Austria, alarming the peasantry with his strange habit of writing. Since 1966 he has lived in London and acquired a steadily swelling reputation as an SF author who -- and this is rare -- not only produces stimulating and intelligent SF but can be hilariously or cruelly funny while doing so. Which is why they laughed.

His first published story was "The Poets of Millgrove, Iowa" (NEW WORLDS, 1966); the even earlier "The Happy Breed" appeared in Harlan Ellison's DANGEROUS VISIONS (1967). His SF novels are THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM (1968 -- known as MECHASM in the U.S.A.), THE MULLER-FOKKER EFFECT (1970) and RODERICK (1980). A sequel to the latter, RODERICK AT RANDOM, is due from Granada in January, 1983, and a further novel TIK-TOK from either Granada or Corgi. There have been three collections of his short stories: THE STEAM-DRIVEN BOY AND OTHER STRANGERS (1973), KEEP THE GIRAFFE BURNING (1977) and THE



INTERVIEWED BY DAVID LANGFORD

BEST OF JOHN SLADEK (U.S.A. only, 1981, comprising most of the contents of the previous two). Another collection, ALIEN ACCOUNTS, was released by Granada in June 1982, shortly after this interview was conducted.

He has also written Gothic novels under the name Cassandra Knye: THE CASTLE AND THE KEY (1966) and THE HOUSE THAT FEAR BUILT (with Thomas M. Disch, 1967). BLACK ALICE (1968) is a satirical thriller, again written with Disch, which first appeared in the U.S.A. under the pseudonym Thom Demijohn. The solo novels BLACK AURA (1974) and INVISIBLE GREEN (1977) are skillful recreations of the no-longer fashionable "locked-room" detective story; an earlier short story in this vein, "By an Unknown Hand," won the 1972 TIMES detective story competition. Perhaps the best of Sladek's non-SF writings is THE NEW APOCRYPHA (1973), which along with Martin Gardner's FADS AND FALLACIES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE belongs on the shelf of anyone sceptical of today's irrational cults and beliefs. His alter ego "James Vogh" has meanwhile written books which the author of THE NEW APOCRYPHA might have handled severely: ARACHNE RISING (1977 -- THE THIRTEENTH ZODIAC in the UK) -- and THE COSMIC FACTOR (1978).

In 1968-9 he co-edited a poetry magazine with Pamela Zoline: RONALD REAGAN, THE MAGAZINE OF POETRY. ("We may revive it.") In 1982 he was co-guest of honor with Angela Carter at the British National Easter SF Convention, "Channelcon" in Brighton. (He has since been revived.)

Something of the feel of reading Sladek was expressed by the serious and critical SF journal, FOUNDATION's football critic not long ago: "And that brilliant header, from a man who is so good above the shoulders that he scarcely needs to use his feet at all, sends the ball sailing between the posts!"

Back in the changing room ...

SFR: John, I have a long-standing grudge against you. Have you ever considered what trouble you caused young people called Langford, as they asked partially-deaf librarians for the title, THE MULLER-FOKKER EFFECT?

SLADEK: Young persons have no business reading such a book, which contains sex, violence and anagrams. I think I can speak for the moral majority here when I assure you that we are doing our best to prevent such problems by closing all libraries.

SFR: But just for now, you're a writer. Why? What makes you write?

SLADEK: I started writing, or rather, thinking, stories as a child, and at that time the reason was very clear. Kids who read a lot come up against the disheartening fact that every story ends. They can try re-reading the same story or they can read more stories in the same series or by the same author. Or they can just read other things and hope that by some magic they'll pick up the narrative thread again. When all of these stratagems fail, there's nothing to do but continue the story yourself, or else give up reading altogether and try some healthier hobby like smashing telephones. We didn't have a phone when I was a kid, and I was too shy to smash any public phones, and our town didn't have a pool hall either, so I had to hang out at the public library -- and anyway, I told myself stories. There was a continuing bedtime saga in which I was the hero in whatever I'd been reading lately, Dave Dawson with the RAF or the Hardy Boys or the Oz books -- it all got blended into the main saga, continued from night to night.

SFR: Is it merely force of habit which keeps the -- outwardly -- adult Sladek writing?

SLADEK: Nowadays why I write is complicated by a lot of factors having nothing to do with writing, such as the need to earn a living and finding out that I'm constitutionally unsuited for working an honest job. There are probably a lot of deep psychological drives too, such as the Freudian need to impress the neighbors (Freud called it keeping up with Ernest Jones), the Oedipal urge to use a lot of carbon paper, the deep-seated need to earn millions and become a household name, like Harold Robbins or Flash Gordon or for that matter Flash.

SFR: I, and I suppose SF fans in general, think of you as primarily a science fiction household name. Do these same deep-seated urges drive you to write SF in particular?

SLADEK: Not guilty. Oh, all right. I do write a little SF in my spare time. I have a kind of standard explanation why, which goes like this: Science fiction is one way of making sense out of a senseless world. I think people are often bewildered by the world they find themselves in, where Russia puts up a special satellite to watch the Falkland Islands War, while in Britain the Queen Mother visits a meat market and is given a 40-pound slab of beef. Today I turned on the radio to hear some recipes for water flea, a delicacy of tomorrow. Anyway, people find themselves in this world, and they say "It's like science fiction," as though

they expected it to be like anything else. SF has at least the advantage of not depending on preconceptions. In a science fiction story, anything can happen. God can walk in halfway through and erase the universe and replace it with 30-second commercial for Singapore Airlines. Or the world turns out to be nothing but a big doner kebab, and we're the salmonella. Why am I telling you this? You must have read some science fiction yourself. You know this is true.

SFR: Yes, but --

SLADEK: Anything can happen in SF. And the fact that nothing ever does happen in SF is only due to the poverty of our imaginations, we who write it or edit it or read it. But SF can in principle deal with anything.

Of course, that leads people into the error of believing that SF has all the answers, that it's a prescriptive or predictive. They want to use it to get a peek at the way the world really will be or really ought to be. Very dangerous, because the predictions of SF are almost always too simple-minded. It's not futurology -- though futurology is too simple-minded too -- and it's not a recipe book for cooking up tomorrows. To my mind, the best SF addresses itself to problems of the here and now, or even to problems which have never been solved and never will be solved -- I'm thinking of Philip K. Dick's work here, dealing with questions of reality, for example. Suppose one were to tackle one of his themes in a conventional novel, the question of the reality of other people. Do other people have thoughts and feelings as I do? In a conventional novel, the question can only be tackled by having a mad character or a philosopher, or a mad philosopher, in the story. But there has to be a framework of conventional reality, a world full of real people enveloping this local madness. In most conventional novels, God is not allowed to be nuts. We are nuts allowed to be God.

SFR: They have to content themselves with being interviewers. Having quizzed you on why you write SF, I'd be interested to hear why you don't -- whether, that is, you think there's any significance in your wide spectrum of activity. Gothics, crime, cultism on both sides of the fence between bunk and debunk, parodies, "mainstream" fiction -- So many writers stick not only with a genre but in their own small niche inside.

SLADEK: I guess basically I wanted to make ten million dollars a minute and also see W.H. Smith filled with nothing but my books in every category: SF, crime, romance, Western, biography, astrology, non-fiction, cookery, car repair manuals,

ordnance survey maps, crossword puzzles.

The whole idea of genre fiction makes a lot of sense if you happen to be running a book supermarket and you need to know whether a given book should be shelved with the toothpaste or the tinned veg. But I don't think of myself as a genre writer and I don't see why any writer should. Nobody expects the reader to confine himself to one department all his life; he can read James Joyce and Barbara Cartland and Zane Grey and Agatha Christie as well as Ray Bradbury, so why shouldn't the writer have the same freedom of choice? And as it turns out, the writer does have. He can move from being tinned carrots to become a frozen rissole. He can even decide to go out of the supermarket altogether and write something available only in discerning delicatessens, i.e., in old-fashioned bookstores. I'm thinking here of Donald Barthelme and Harry Math-

writing locked-room mysteries like those. SF has much more glamour and glitter attached to it, in these high-tech days.

SFR: At least you've never seemed to be a starving author. Your career started with quite a splash in 1966-8: two solo and two collaborated (with Tom Disch) novels, plus your first short SF stories. Does Disch have a lot to answer for?

SLADEK: He was really responsible for getting me started in SF. To begin with, we collaborated on a few stories, silly stuff like "The Discovery of the Nullitron" (GALAXY, 1966). On the strength of our selling these, he persuaded his agent to take on my own fiction. He also told me about all those professional writing tricks like typing on one side of the paper, and he criticized stories that I read aloud to him. Then we collaborated on a Gothic and BLACK ALICE. These early collaborations

tween books, so a further collaboration looks unlikely for some time.

SFR: Since we've strayed towards the beginning of your career, perhaps you have words to say about those gothics, as by "Cassandra Knye?" Tongue-in-cheek, or deeply-felt works of stark emotional power?

SLADEK: Help! The gothics again! Will they never give me peace? No, I see the grave-earth moving, the withered hand of Cassandra Knye clawing back to the surface ... a withered cheek with a hideous black tongue still in it ...

SFR: Deeply-felt works of stark emotional power, then. Undoubtedly Ms. Knye's favorite novels are UDOLPHO and THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO. But what books and authors does Mr. Sladek most enjoy?

SLADEK: My top forty? I suspect the list would be longer than that and would seem odd, mostly because I couldn't stop to explain why I like each writer. Even then, much of it probably resembles the lists of everyone else (or of English class syllabuses); for instance, my favorite book is ULYSSES and my list would no doubt include Swift, Fielding, Sterne, Dickens and George Eliot, Hawthorne, Melville and Poe. So let me just mention at random a few people on my list who might not turn up everywhere. Ring Lardner, G.K. Chesterton, O. Henry, Nathaniel West, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, William Gaddis, Harry Mathews, Bernard Malamud, Vance Bourjaily, George P. Elliott, Djuna Barnes, Joe Orton, Tom Stoppard, Kenneth Koch, Robert Coover, Vladimir Nabokov, Angus Wilson, Terry Southern, Evelyn Waugh, Flann O'Brien -- to mention only writers in English. The problem and privilege we all have is being alive in this century and able to read this language. It makes any list meaningless except the list of an illiterate.

SFR: Some of my own favorites there, especially Chesterton and O'Brien. You don't mention any specifically SF authors, though.

SLADEK: So far as SF goes, I am an illiterate; my list of favorites comes down to Tom Disch, Philip K. Dick and half-a-dozen others. I haven't read much, and am not au courant with what's in the magazines. This is mainly because I spend a lot of time writing and so don't have much time to read; I hate to waste that time reading what may turn out to be junk food for the mind, when there's so much real writing to be read.

SFR: Do any of your favorite authors exert a sinister, creeping influence



ews, for example; Samuel Beckett is seldom seen in the supermarket either.

SFR: What about the barriers within the supermarket? Garry Kilworth once told me he'd use a pseudonym should he write outside the SF genre, since his SF connections might be harmful outside the ghetto wall. Might your own detective novels, say, have suffered thus?

SLADEK: I think these days an SF connection would be a boost to other books; I'm sure more people have read my two little detective puzzles because of the SF connection. Those two novels suffered mainly from being written about 50 years after the fashion for puzzles of detection. I enjoyed writing them, planning the absurd crimes and clues, but I found I was turning out a product the supermarket didn't need any more -- stove polish or yellow cakes of laundry soap. One could starve very quickly

not only helped finance my start as a full-time writer, they gave me the confidence to carry on. I've been writing full-time ever since.

SFR: BLACK ALICE is rather a distinguished thriller, with some very Disch and some very Sladek bits. How did you go about the collaboration?

SLADEK: We wrote BLACK ALICE like this: Tom had the main idea. We discussed and agreed upon a plot outline. I wrote a rough draft. Tom wrote a second draft. We then argued and argued, each trying to preserve his own favorite characters and lines, and finally the book came out bigger than planned.

SFR: Might you repeat the performance some day?

SLADEK: Tom and I are never in the same city long enough and both be-

over your own work?

SLADEK: Whatever I'm reading at the moment seems to influence whatever I'm writing. I found some time ago that I have to be careful, while working on a novel, what I read. People may notice the influence of Joseph Heller in "Masterson and the Clerks" or of William Gaddis in RODERICK. Recently I've been reading Angela Carter and John Cheever, so I suppose my work will soon have clouds of purple perfume or else exhilarating sunlight on suburban lawns, or something.

SFR: Whereas much current SF would merely afflict you with rotten grammar. Disregarding all these influences, which of your own books do you like best? One of the SF novels, presumably.

SLADEK: RODERICK -- the completed story. I usually like whatever I've recently finished best. Just as a parent prefers a new baby or a Defense Department prefers the new improved missile with extra warheads and teletext and an optional 5-year service warranty.

SFR: The "complete" RODERICK being the published book RODERICK plus its sequel, provisionally titled RODERICK AT LARGE?

SLADEK: The second volume is now called RODERICK AT RANDOM; I'm hoping to sell a few copies to any Smollett scholars who happen to be buying books in a hurry.

SFR: That famous scourge of the writing classes, John Clute, suggests that a couple of keys to what makes you tick are to be found in your upbringing, in the American Midwest. Certainly, though you've lived in London since 1966, your SF novels have tended to be set in the Midwest and to satirize it mercilessly. Is this a matter of convenience or of deep significance?

SLADEK: I always figure I can have the Midwest one way or the other. Because it's my background, it ought to be a voice that comes easily. I could argue that I know fairly well how Midwesterners speak and think. But if that turns out not to be true, if I'm mythicizing the place, that's fine too. Well-realized mythical places are hard enough to come by, so I win again. I am planning someday to set a novel, or at least a short story, in Albania. All I know of Albania is that Americans aren't allowed to go there and that it once had a King Zog; the rest can be made up. It'll probably come out looking exactly like the American Midwest.

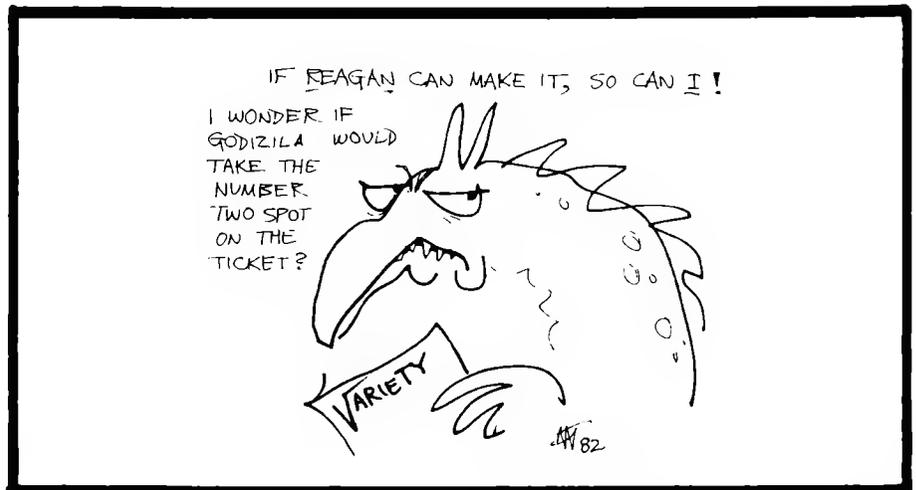
SFR: Clute also makes some critical play with your being a "lapsed Catholic"; and Michael Frayn once wrote of "the tone of voice, hard to describe yet curiously distinctive, which sounds through a great many of the English Catholic writers. Perhaps it is a certain intellectual perverseness." Considering that there's a thread of compulsive intellectual doodling (ciphers, anagrams, palindromes, acrostics, endless word and number games) running through your work, I can't help wondering whether you think there might be some connection?

SLADEK: Well, of course it would be swell to be bracketed with Graham Greene and Chesterton and Evelyn Waugh (I draw the line at Belloc). But I'm not even English. In America, I think, Roman Catholicism tends to be more Protestant, populist, sweaty and anti-intellectual. More in the tone of STUDS LONIGAN (by

SLADEK: And J.L. Borgus wrote, "According to Bloy, we are the versicles or words or letters of a magic book, and that incessant book is the only thing in the world; or rather, it is the world."

I think scientists also share in that peculiar vision of the world as a book. There's Fred Hoyle's idea of clouds of DNA or bacteria or something floating around in space and now and then starting life on a planet like ours -- so the DNA code would be written across the universe (in all the margins of the book).

SFR: You have me there: I'm a lapsed physicist. Still on the subject of your own incessant books -- let's not sit round being impartial. I think THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM, THE MULLER-FOKKER EFFECT and RODERICK are fine SF books which stand up to rereading, and I'm looking forward to the further Sladek books promised. Now besides the Midwestern setting



James T. Farrell) than say THE MAN WHO WAS THURSDAY or Scobie in Greene's THE HEART OF THE MATTER or the chap in BRIDESHEAD REVISITED. I'm trying to see how my being a "lapsed" Catholic relates to my being a compulsive intellectual doodle dandy, if I am either. Whence the ciphers and anagrams, I don't know.

One connection might be that in general, Catholics (among others) behave as though the world were one enormous cipher text in which everything means something -- but only to God or Fate. Catholic writers constantly have characters struggling against their fates, or trying to divine the meaning of their lives, usually failing.

SFR: Science fiction, you said earlier, is a way of making sense out of a senseless world ...

and word/numberplay we've discussed, your SF novels have more in common: they're very funny and satirical about U.S. life and everything else, they have large casts of characters, they involve several narrative lines chopped into many short scenes -- more complexity. Does it just happen that you haven't yet come to write an SF novel where you'd find a "straightforward" continuous narrative appropriate?

SLADEK: I guess it's the influence of Dickens again, but once I think of a comic character I find I have to get them into the novel one way or another. The narrative line of TIK-TOK looks fairly straight so far -- but I haven't finished fiddling with it yet.

SFR: Another long-running Sladek theme is our danger of growing less human than our machines. (That word you coined in the story "The Brass Monkey" speaks volumes: robotomized.)

In RODERICK there's an obvious and powerful contrast between the very human machine Roderick and the nominally human characters whose minds run in more mechanical grooves than his. "Automata conditioned by consciousness programs," as Ian Watson likes to say of everyone but him.

SLADEK: It's an idea that our century seems to have taken up as a touchstone for other social and psychological worries: the idea of people acting like machines acting like people certainly appealed to the Dadaists, for instance. Duchamp took it pretty far before he retired from painting to play chess. And there's always a mixture of comedy and terror in the idea, as in Ambrose Bierce's "Moxon's Master," the chessplaying robot who rebels. I suppose the idea bites deep into the psychological mechanism by which humans recognize other humans, babies recognizing faces and so on. Now we know that theoretically we can fool that mechanism with artificial people, and that knowledge has to affect the way we think about ourselves. Many of the old definitions of "human" are no longer so clear.

SFR: "A featherless biped" certainly fits Roderick ... I liked touches such as his attempts to create Art, little meaningless purple squares which later prove identical with the works of a highly regarded conceptual artist.

SLADEK: There's a touching argument that people used to use against the idea of artificial people, namely that a machine will never be able to paint like Velasquez. But the world is full of real people who couldn't paint the Rokeby Venus, either. They may lack originality or talent, or they may happen to lead unfortunate lives cut off from beauty, lives wholly constrained and mechanical.

SFR: To quote one of your own autobiographical snippets: "I feel I ought to do my part in helping machines take over the arts and sciences, leaving us with plenty of leisure time for important things, like extracting square roots and figuring pay rolls."

Since the sequel to RODERICK is almost upon us, have you anything to say about it here? (Apart from the usual "Buy it! Act without thinking!")

SLADEK: I don't want to seem to hype the book. Let's just say it is the story of a group of happy-go-lucky flyboys on their tight little Mediterranean island. It's the story of war and peace, love and lust, beauty and the beast within all men.

SFR: A masterpiece of the softsell.

SLADEK: No, actually it's a cover blurb for CATCH-22 I saw about 20 years ago and memorized. I knew it would come in handy.

SFR: Well, can you reveal anything about your next novel TIK-TOK -- also I understand, featuring robots?

SLADEK: Yes, TIK-TOK is about a robot, but not a nice robot like Roderick. In fact, Tik-Tok is bad. That is about all I can say now, except to mention that it's a story of war and peace, of sons and lovers, of mice and men.

SFR: And after that?

SLADEK: I'm still finishing TIK-TOK. After that, a book provisionally called MAPS. It will be something between a novel and a set of linked stories, but the linkages are going to be fairly complex, with stories inside stories, stories completely permeating one another, a character in one story turning into, say, an event or a place in another -- in other words, the notion of mapping is going to predominate. If all this sounds vague and confusing, it is because I'm still vague and confused about it -- and will be until I start work on it.

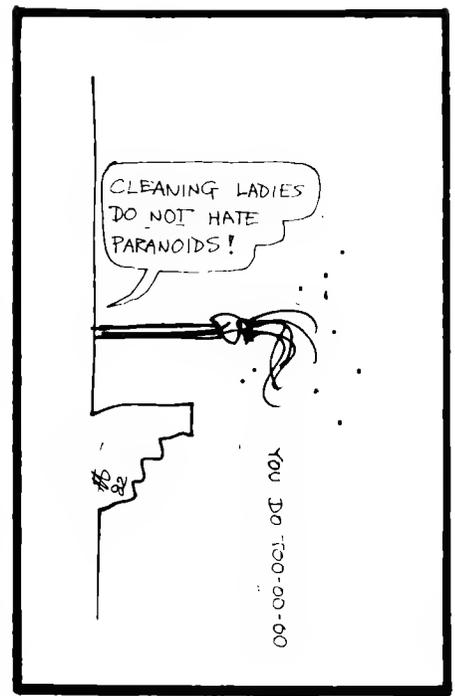
SFR: This brings us with suspicious neatness to short fiction. I've noticed that some favorites among your own stories don't seem to have made it into Sladek collections ...

SLADEK: Most publishers seem very reluctant to publish short story collections at all; they bring them out in paperback, often disguised as novels.

SFR: Specifically, I was thinking of "Masterson and the Clerks," your office epic, which gets an admiring thumbs-up in the ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF SF yet hasn't been collected: I had to dig it out of an old NEW WORLDS. Will it and more of your uncollected stories appear in the forthcoming ALIEN ACCOUNTS, or will this book feature more new tales?

SLADEK: The stories in ALIEN ACCOUNTS are all used, or as they say of cars nowadays, pre-owned. They are all stories of office life, beginning with "Masterson and the Clerks."

SFR: Your parodies of other SF authors (in THE STEAM-DRIVEN BOY) have attracted some praise -- good fun and often worthwhile criticism into the bargain. For example, the Asimov spoof is a much more entertaining assault on the Laws of Robotics than Stanislaw Lem's rather boring dismissals.



sal of them. But do you find that, as someone said, it's only possible to write good parodies of authors you admire?

SLADEK: I don't admire all the authors I parody equally, and usually what I admire about them doesn't come into the parody. For instance, Robert Heinlein has written stories of paranoia, beautifully sustained and slowly articulated -- like "They." So it's easier to parody his other stuff, naturally.

My deep admiration for Ray Bradbury, Philip K. Dick and J.G. Ballard must show, I think.

SFR: Yes -- though perhaps not the funniest, those are definitely the best parodies.

SLADEK: Some of the others are obviously less careful. The Wells parody -- "Pemberly's Start-Afresh Cal-liepe" -- isn't a parody at all, really, just a silly scientific romance I'm not sure I could do any more ...

SFR: Silly science leads to THE NEW APOCRYPHA, subtitled "a guide to strange sciences and occult beliefs" ... where you put the boot into numerous weirdo cults, UFOs, perpetual motion machines, ancient astronauts, the lot. I gather Michael Moorcock talked you into writing this one, following your dismissals of McLuhan, von Daniken etcetera, in 1960s issues of NEW WORLDS?

SLADEK: Moorcock was actually going to do the book, or at least some book on irrational beliefs under that title. But he got busy or tired

of it, and turned the title and some sources (a starter set) over to me. In no time at all I was buried far too deep in it. See, I have no journalism in my background, so I wasn't practiced at research or writing non-fiction, nor at handling the truth in a journalistic way. Journalists know when to call a halt and write something, but I kept on looking for answers.

SFR: The hero of your BLACK AURA observes that it's just as dangerous and fanatical to disbelieve all strange phenomena as it is to fall for them all. Is that more or less your own view; and did you approach the cult material with, perhaps, the hope that some of these loonies might have found something worthy of belief?

SLADEK: Yes, I did, but it was a vain hope. I especially hoped parapsychology would turn up something, because much of it looked like good science being done by good scientists. But all I found were murky experiments, self-deception and fraud.

SFR: So in the end you came down hard on just about everything.

SLADEK: The sources, with their impenetrable prose and lack of humor, didn't make it any easier. In reaction, I probably was more sarcastic to some of them than I needed to be. Anyway I seemed to spend years on that book, always finding more I had to read. The occult explosion was on, too, with more stuff happening every week. The year or so after the book came out, we had Uri Geller, Koestler's coincidence theories, the Berlitz triangle and so on. The book could probably use a new expanded edition, but I'm reluctant to undertake it.

SFR: Pity. Wasn't a snippet cut from the paperback TNA, though, because somebody complained?

SLADEK: The Scientologists sued me for libel because I had quoted an article from QUEEN magazine without realizing that they had successfully sued for libel over that. So in lieu of damages, they got to alter the section on Scientology in the British paperback edition -- much in the way vets alter tomcats.

SFR: I suppose you must have had a vast anguished response to that book.

SLADEK: Yes. Most letters agreed with me that all these subjects were a complete waste of time -- however, there was this one subject that was not pseudoscience at all....

SFR: More recently, you've been having a go at the other side of the case with your "James Vogh" books --

establishing a mystical thirteenth zodiacal sign, for example, with reasoning somewhat better than that of the average von Daniken in the street. Were these books conceived as serious and devout contributions to astrological lore?

SLADEK: The James Vogh books, ARACHNE RISING and THE COSMIC FACTOR, were conceived as jokes, but very quickly turned into moneymaking enterprises. Only they didn't make a lot of money, either. So finally they turn out to have been a gigantic waste of time. Except that I can say that I invented or discovered the lost 13th sign of the zodiac.

SFR: Ah, yes, the sign Arachne (May 13 to June 9). Were you born under it, by any chance?

SLADEK: No, I was born in either October or December, depending on whether you believe the hospital records or the state records -- the two don't agree.

SFR: From hospitals it's a natural step to SF conventions (or vice versa). Having just been joint guest of honor at the 33rd British Eastercon this year, how do you regard the teeming hordes of SF fans? I assume from the evil leer you constantly wore in the bar that it wasn't that horrid an experience.

SLADEK: Leer? That was some kind of rictus brought on by the strychnine flavoring in the lager (which reaches the parts no one even wants to reach). There was anyway only one teeming horde, and it didn't seem all that much. There seemed to be a lot of SAS-type military people about, and they did seem a bit, but everyone else gallantly pretended not to notice. It was altogether not a bad Apres-midi d'un Fan. A lot like what I imagine a good class reunion to be.

SFR: But as well as mingling with fans, you're one of the relatively few authors who in addition to some SF genre success can, well, "pass" in the world of Serious Mainstream Literary Worth -- magazines like BANANAS, AMBIT and so on ...

SLADEK: Well, of course, this interview is going to blow all that. People who thought I was straight will now realize I go in for "SF" as we call it.

You make it sound as though I am this writer whom everybody thinks is straight until one day his wife comes home and finds him standing before the mirror wearing a silver suit and a glass helmet. He makes some feeble excuse about a costume party, but then she opens his desk drawer

and out fall copies of OMNI and a Carl Sagan book (it falls open to the well-thumbed page with the Pioneer 10 drawing). Then of course, he goes to an analyst who shows him pictures of asteroids and gives him painful shocks. But nothing works. Finally he just puts on his green pointed ears and goes to the supermarket -- and nobody notices! They treat him just like a real Martian!

SFR: I'm speechless. (Long pause.) Thank you, Nhoj Kedals of Mars.

ALIEN ACCOUNTS

By John Sladek
Granada, 1982, 202 pp., £1.95

REVIEWED BY DAVE LANGFORD

Each Sladek collection moves further from anything that can be called standard SF. This, his third, will baffle readers with a deep-seated need for mighty spaceships and black holes -- its appeal is to those who agree with the Aldiss dictum that SF is at its best when on the point of turning into something else. With bizarre and highly literate wit, Sladek puts the faceless forces of Kafka's CASTLE or TRIAL in the proper modern setting -- office life -- and makes them not only sinister but funny.

Forms are more important than what's described by them, as the hero of "Name (Please Print)" learns when his are lost; "Anxietal Register B" is a quintessential form which develops into a kind of do-it-yourself horror story ("If you are merely reading this form, why do you believe that you have not been asked to fill it out?"). Closest to familiar SF are blackly funny tales which let real people run riot in the interstices of a Gernsbackian vision of future wonders ("198- a Tale of 'Tomorrow'") or send up the self-deception of psychic researchers and debunkers ("Scenes from the Country of the Blind").

Two-thirds of the collection is taken up by the longest "office" tales. "Masterson and the Clerks" is the sort of piece to make reviewers put straws in their hair and tentatively scrawl, "If Kafka had written CATCH-22 with an office setting ..." The most opaque and uncompromisingly non-SF item here, it seems a poor choice for opening story, yet it does grow on you and is ultimately rather touching, besides causing many a smile en route. Closing the book is "The Communicants", a mini-novel whose crazed zigzaggery resembles that of the brilliant THE MULLER-FOKKER EFFECT. Drum Inc. is in the

communications business; it and all employees have weird and hilarious communication problems, floundering in the gap between names and things, saying and meaning, their own make-believe and Sladek's (one chap amputates all his limbs one by one in a succession of "cries for help" which is hideously funny), the bottom line always being the alarming paradox: "There seems to be no difference at all between the message of maximum content (or maximum ambiguity) and the message of zero content (noise)." There's a good deal (but not too much) content in this 72-page story, which alone is worth the price of admission. A couple of slight pieces round the collection out to eight stories.

I love Sladek's inventive wit, his gift for parody, his flattering assumption that the reader is intelligent -- so many authors feel each joke should be underlined twice and preceded by a man carrying a red flag. This cuts both ways, and sometimes I find myself metaphorically ducking in alarm at the whiz of some little piece of cleverness going over my head. All the same: recommended.



TEN YEARS AGO IN SF -- FALL, 1972
BY ROBERT SABELLA

The rush to memorialize John Campbell was on. Conde' Nast announced the John W. Campbell Award to be given to the best new writer as voted by the attendees each year at the Worldcon. Illinois Institute of Technology announced the John W. Campbell Memorial Award to be given for the best original novel each year. It would be voted on by a panel of five judges, including both writers and academics ... Roger Elwood began soliciting submissions for a reported 42 original anthologies he was editing. Hardly a week passed by without his announcing a new title ... Singer David Bowie released THE RISE AND FALL OF ZIGGY STARDUST AND THE SPIDERS FROM MARS, a fully-realized concept album with a strong science fictional theme. It received strong reviews, even being selected by TIME MAGAZINE as one of the best albums of the year ... Avon Books announced they would publish NEW WORLDS as a paperback ... The November issue of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION contained "The Meeting", a new collaboration by C.M. Kornbluth and Frederik Pohl, 14 years after Kornbluth's death.

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LETTER FROM JOHN BRUNNER
BRUNNER FACT & FICTION, LTD
The Square House, Palmer Street
South Petherton
Somerset TA13 5DB. England
July 25, 1982

'We have a new dog called Barkis. Today, when I took him, Domino and Vrisketai for the regular Sunday morning walk I had a bad fit of logogriphy. (Don't ask! It means the compulsion to create anagrams, apparently, and is most often applied to people who go in for Scrabble competitions: logogriphists!)

'PS: Barkis was called Barkis before we got him because his mother is Peggotty and Barkis is willing. Domino is called after Domino Harbor in Labrador because she is a Labrador, and Vrisketai ("she is found" in Greek) because she was found: a starving little Welsh collie who is now fat, old and allergic to something that makes her chew out her hair by jawfulls every summer. Poor beast! -- JKHB'

TRADERS OF THE WORST BARK

BY JOHN BRUNNER

The story so far:

SIR A. BARKIS, KB, receives a BRISK note from a native letter-writer, or SKRIAB, in SRI BAK, informing him that S.K. BAIR -- a keen sunbather, or BASKIR -- has gone BASIRK after eating BRAKSI mutton, and vanished into the great cane-forest known as the BRAIKS. Since Bair was his ARKSIB, i.e. shared a locker with him at the 'varsity, this IRKS BA, as he is known. He consults BAKIRS Travel Service, who book him passage on a ship belonging to SIRK AB of Sweden, the BISKRA (Captain B. SKIRA commanding). On board he makes friends with A.B. RIKS (hello, sailor!). Arriving in SARBIK, he goes to the police house, or BARIKS, where sinister Inspector KRAIBS says Bair should have travelled by any means BAR SKI.

Later, dining at the RIB SAK, a fast-food joint run by the enigmatic RABSKI, off smoked herring (KIBARS), seafood stew (KRABIS) and a delicacy akin to Algerian brig (BRIKAS), washed down with "S.B." RAKI and "AKS" BIR, KRIS AB tells him he thinks Bair was kidnapped by a motorcycle gang, the BIKARS, who mistook him for a revenue agent or I.R. SKAB.

A voice says, "KAB, SIR? Com' viz me to ze KIS BAR!" Recognizing the dancer BRISKA from BAKRI'S Theatre of the ABSIRK, who performs to an old record of SBARKI and His Magic Piano, he realizes he's in a terrible SKRATB, but not wanting to seem to B SKAIRed simply answers, "No, I'm BAR SIK just now, but my friend's last words were ASK BRI -- what do you know about all this?" So she advises him to go to BIR SKA in North Africa, where Bair used to toss KABIRS. Suddenly he notices Ris pointing a gun. "BAK, RIS!" he shouts. "BAK, SIR!" Too late. A shot rings out. "IS KARB!" moans the dying girl, and he sets out for IKBAR'S to find out who KARB IS. Now read on. And on. And on ...

ONCE OVER LIGHTLY

BOOK REVIEWS BY GENE DEWEESE

2010: ODYSSEY TWO

By Arthur C. Clarke
Ballantine/DelRey, \$14.95

REVIEWED BY GENE DEWEESE

For my money, Arthur C. Clarke has written two of the three most memorable science fiction stories of any length: "Rescue Party" and "Childhood End." (The third is Isaac Asimov's "Nightfall.") And all of his fiction, from "A Fall of Moondust" through "Rendezvous with RAMA" to "Fountains of Paradise," is liberally sprinkled with that same, spine-tingling sense of wonder that made me read his first novel, AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT at least three times and buy, over the years, at least a half dozen copies of it and the later, expanded version, CITY AND THE STARS.

2010 also has its share of that same sense of wonder, which means that it is one of the dozen or so most enjoyable SF books of the year. Even so, it is in some ways disappointing, not only because it doesn't live up to the exorbitant advance publicity but because it doesn't measure up to Clarke's best.

On the plus side, as Carl Sagan says on the dust jacket, it is a "daring romp through the solar system." Clarke shows us a variety of wonders, both real and imagined, and the picture of a future of cooperation in space between the U.S. and Russia is realistically optimistic. There is life not only tens of thousands of miles down in the maelstrom of Jupiter's atmosphere but beneath the ice of Europa.

The Star Gate, still orbiting Jupiter, opens once again and something -- not quite the David Bowman who vanished there nearly a decade before -- emerges to carry out the wishes of its new masters and, in the end, give a cryptic warning to the expedition that has finally come to the Jovian system to find out what happened to the original expedition in 2001. The lobotomized HAL is even revived and (I think) given a soul.

On the other hand, 2010 is not so much a sequel to the original book, which was in many ways superior to the movie, but a sequel to and an explanation of the movie. Unfortunately, many of these explanations already existed in the book, 2001, though not always in the same form. In 2010, some are simply expanded upon or modified slightly, such as the reasons for HAL's turning against the crew. Others, however, are in effect, downgraded. The monoliths, for instance, are treated in a much more down-to-earth way in 2010. The biggest comedown, however, was in the nature of the Star Child, the creature into which Bowman was transformed at the end of 2001. In the original book -- and to some extent in the movie -- the Star Child was cosmically spine-tingling, a harbinger of the next, unknowable quantum leap in human evolution. In 2010, however, the transformed Bowman is no longer a god-like Star Child but an all too human energy creature who is little more than an observer for his still incomprehensible masters beyond the Star Gate. Similarly, their purpose, compared to what was only hinted at in the original book, is though a bit mind-boggling, all too cut and dried.

Still, for those who have only seen the movie (and were perhaps confused by its ambiguities), 2010 is an excellent way to clear up that confusion while being taken on a fascinating tour of the post-Voyager solar system. Just to play it safe, though, don't read 2001 first.

MINDKILLER

By Spider Robinson
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, \$14.50

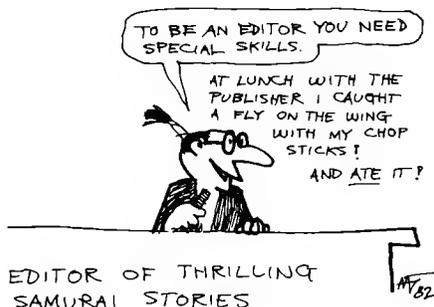
REVIEWED BY GENE DEWEESE

Two seemingly unrelated stories, both beginning with unsuccessful suicide attempts, one in 1994 and the other in 1999, are intercut until they blend into one. The elements are kidnapping, mind control, international conspiracy and a reluctant hero aided by the emotionally stunted young woman whose life he saved and the super-computer setup whose origin is lost in one of the many blank spots in his memory. The style is well-done best-seller adventure and intrigue with dollops of well-integrated and largely necessary-to-the-plot sex. The settings are a degenerating, end-of-the-century New York and a relatively safe and sane Halifax and surrounding Nova Scotia countryside. The result is very grabby, almost nonstop suspense of the kind all too often missing from "straight" science fiction, combined with the sort of surprises that, while not unusual in SF, are very unusual and unexpected in best-seller intrigue novels.

DAGGER OF THE MIND

By Bob Shaw
Ace, Paperback, \$2.25

John Redpath is the subject in an all-too-successful experiment in drug-induced telepathy, or maybe he's just going crazy. Either way, he's having horrendous visions of skinned people, houses with stomachs that are trying to eat him, and the murder (by Redpath himself), of a girl friend. In the end, things are explained in a suitably science fictional way having to do with gestalt minds and aliens, and along the way Shaw shows us his usual interesting assortment of troubled, unhappy characters. The visions do go on a bit too long, however, after everyone knows they're nothing but visions. Even so, it's an enjoyable few hours that would have been even more enjoyable with twenty or thirty fewer pages.



THE FIRES OF PARATIME

By L.E. Modesitt, Jr.
Timescape, Paperback, \$2.95

By "diving through undertime," members of the immortal Temporal Guard of the planet Query can roam at will throughout most of the past two million years and much of the galaxy. Query, however, has no science of its own and produces nothing. Instead, it lives parasitically, using what the time-divers can buy or steal from other civilizations, past and present. And if any civilization appears to be a threat, it can be destroyed by the time-divers before it even comes into existence.

THE FIRES OF PARATIME tells of one young Guard who slowly, if not all that convincingly, learns the true nature of the Guard, and with his own growing and almost godlike powers, sets out to destroy its influence. The cosmic concepts are often fascinating, the action fast, and the prose sometimes chilling if a bit purple, such as when the narrator speaks of the "winds of change ... that howl down the corridors of time." In short, it probably wouldn't hold up to a rigorous logical or literary analysis but it's a lot of fun.

EARTHCHILD

By Sharon Webb
Atheneum, \$11.95

In the not-too-distant future, the government secretly puts something in the water and food that makes everyone below 17 immortal but has no affect on anyone else. When adults begin slaughtering children out of jealousy, fanaticism, etc., the children are taken to isolated encampments where they can be raised and trained in safety. A hundred years later, however, it has become apparent that the "spark of genius" invariably vanishes with the coming of immortality, and the possibility of giving a few gifted children the option to forego the immortality treatment is being considered. The first of a trilogy, EARTHCHILD is seen through the eyes of a budding musician who gives up his music to be trained for leadership in the new world. The early chapters, with their disturbing pictures of parents turning against children, work better than the later ones, in which the "utopian" new world and its problems are shown. Still it is all well written and often gripping, and the loose ends will presumably be tied up in later volumes.

TRIPLANETARY, FIRST LENSMAN, GALACTIC PATROL, GRAY LENSMAN, SECOND STAGE LENSMAN, CHILDREN OF THE LENS

Berkley, Paperback, \$2.50 each.

With epic space battles, endless intergalactic heroics and villainy and staunchly cardboard characters galore, these six novels, originally published more than thirty years ago, range across most of our universe, past and future, and a couple more besides. In a way, the Lensman series served as a prototype for all subsequent space operas, a sort of super STAR WARS, and if you're in the mood for that sort of thing, they're great fun.

These are, by the way, pretty cheap reissues. They didn't even bother to change the footnotes referring to previous books. They still refer to the Pyramid editions instead of their own ...



MANSEED

By Jack Williamson
Ballantine/DelRey, \$10.95

In the not-too-distant future the genetic information necessary to reproduce human life is fed into the computers of thousands of "seedships", which are launched in hopes that a few will survive the journey to other stars and will find unoccupied worlds on which to take root and grow. A million years later, one of the ships, its memory damaged by a micrometeorite, comes to a planet on which an advanced civilization once existed but on which thousands of years ago, all animal life outside the oceans was obliterated. The struggle to survive is complicated not only by the fear that the destroyers will return but even more by the fact that all too many of the mental and emotional weaknesses of the computer's original builders have seeped into the com-

puters and hence into the reconstructed humans and their cyborg "Defenders." Williamson, a top writer for more than fifty years, has managed to combine the sense of wonder of his old-time space operas with modern psychological realism and he's done it far more successfully and satisfyingly than, for instance, Frederik Pohl did in GATEWAY a few years ago.

NOR CRYSTAL TEARS

By Alan Dean Foster
Ballantine/DelRey, Paperback, \$2.75

A first-contact novel told entirely from the aliens' viewpoint, NOR CRYSTAL TEARS tells of the first, accidental meeting between humans and the insect-like Thranx. The civilization and psychology of the Thranx are explored in detail, including their ingrained fear of mammals, those strange and terrifying creatures who literally wear their bodies outside their skeletons. The story never bogs down in the background, however, or slows down enough to get dull as a small group of humans and Thranx take daring chances to overcome the shortsighted reservations of their governments and establish a meaningful contact between the two space-traveling races. In fact, if the book has a fault, it's an overuse of dramatic coincidence, but that's a minor quibble about this excellent prequel to Foster's equally excellent, "Tar-Aiy-Krang" series.

FEVRE DREAM

By George R.R. Martin
Poseidon Press, \$14.95

Vampires, long-lived and with tremendous strength and recuperative powers, are a separate race that has always coexisted with humans, using them as cattle to satisfy their recurrent and irresistible "red thirst." Only a score or so still survive, and one has learned how to conquer that thirst. In partnership with a riverboat captain he searches for the others in order to share his knowledge, which would eventually enable them to live in harmony with humans, but their leader, their bloodmaster, is dangerously insane and will have none of it. Filled with rich characters and almost continuous suspense, FEVRE DREAM is for at least the first 200 pages, the best vampire novel I've read, and Martin's recreation of the 1850s

along the Mississippi is the equal of the best historical novels. The only problem is that the story turns overly melodramatic now and then, especially near the end, but even so, it kept me up till 5:00 a.m. to finish it.

THE VENETIAN COURT

By Charles L. Harness
Ballantine/DelRey, Paperback, \$2.25

In this somewhat surreal picture of the 21st Century, patent infringement is a capital offense with no appeal, and ninety percent of all inventions are being churned out by Faust, a super computer whose own inventor has mysteriously disappeared and whose new owners appear to be out to take over the world. Then there's the judge presiding over the patent infringement case around which the story revolves, Rex "Spider" Geyer, who can only get his creative juices flowing in order to write a long overdue legal opinion by sentencing someone to death. (During law school, he got himself "up" for exams by killing rats in the lab in which he worked.) Harness, a patent attorney himself, has come up with a fast-moving and entertaining mixture of Perry Mason court room action, wild adventure and biting satire.

SIDESHOW

By Mike Resnick
Signet, Paperback, \$2.50

A galaxy-spanning bureaucratic travel agency routinely uses a carnival freak show as a cover for its alien tour groups on Earth. During one of the tours, however, a crooked human carny operator steals the freak show, takes it on tour, and eventually manages to make a profitable deal for himself with the alien bureaucracy. The idea is interesting, the characters -- alien and human alike -- well developed, and the grungy carnival background is vivid. Unfortunately, the carny owner, as seen through the eyes of the narrator, a put-upon hunchback, is so insensitive and obnoxious that having him start to show signs of sympathy and humanity rather than having him wiped out is, though believable enough, not all that satisfying. Still, I'm looking forward to the next in the series when the carny operator apparently will take his show on the galactic road.



MOVIE REVIEWS

CREEPSHOW, INCUBUS AND THE SENDER

After taking a chance on these three despite almost universally negative reviews, I've begun to wonder if, in passing up other horror movies because they've been panned by critics, I'm not missing some good things. Had I listened to the reviewers in these three cases, I certainly would have.

What's particularly irritating in the case of *INCUBUS* and *THE SENDER* is that these same critics usually spend their time complaining about how simple-minded and predictable and graphically gory the usual horror movies are, while here they complained about ambiguity and a lack of satisfactory explanations. Not only that, they made the movies sound as if they were filled with slashing and severing and all the rest, while in reality there was hardly a single such on-camera scene in either movie. True, a lot of gore is being generated just out of camera range, particularly in *INCUBUS*, and bloody floors and sheets abound, but the acts themselves are, thankfully, never shown. (In

CREEPSHOW, though, there was one final scene with erupting cockroaches I could have done without, but that's a relatively minor quibble.)

As for predictability, I've seen my share of horror movies, and both *INCUBUS* and *THE SENDER* kept me guessing, even after the final scene, which I suppose is why the critics complained about a lack of clarity. Since what kills most horror movies, however, is all too much clarity and predictability, these were, for me, refreshing changes.

THE SENDER is perhaps the most original, involving a projective telepath who has no control over his talent and involuntarily drags people into his own nightmares. It also contains a number of interestingly weird crazies in the asylum he is taken to after his initial suicide attempt fails. One, for instance, is convinced he's Christ and is quite offended by hints that the new arrival may himself be Christ.

INCUBUS is a bit more standard, taking the incubus idea straight out of mythology, including its appearance and purpose. Its human identity, however, and some of the clinical problems of being raped by a demon weren't all that expected, at least not by me. And the acting in both is a cut above average, as well it should be with people like John Cassavetes and John Ireland.

Parts of *CREEPSHOW*, on the other hand, are very, very predictable, particularly to anyone who ever read EC Comics way back when, but in four of the five stories it doesn't make a lot of difference. I mean, who could fault a story that has a gruesomely rotting corpse climb out of its grave and stomp around killing people while croaking loudly, "I want my cake!" Or one that has a Scrooge-like tycoon threaten to fire whoever let an unauthorized person get his private phone number, and then, when he learns that the offender is the caller's husband, who died only hours earlier, shrug and smile in satisfaction. Or one that has a murderous monster take the crate from which he was just released and shove it back under the stairs where it had been kept for 140 years and then crawl back inside, not to wait for more victims but because it felt more at home under the stairs. In short, it did exactly what it set out to do, i.e., to have a lot of gruesome fun and to literally put an EC-type comic book on the screen.

HOW NOT TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION

BY RICHARD WILSON

I take my text from page 16 of that newly definitive work entitled "Asimov on Science Fiction", the 1982 Avon edition: "In science fiction you not only must know your science, but you must also have a rational notion as to how to modify or extrapolate that science." This horrifies me and I have to voice a minority opinion.

But first let me digress to congratulate Avon Books for having learned, just this year, how to spell "foreword." For years Avon had been spelling it "forward" as in the reverse of "backward." At least I can document it back to the year 1969, when Avon spelled it "forward" on the title page of A.R. Luria's "The Mind of a Mnemonist."

The reason I know Avon learned to spell better this year is that when it reprinted James Blish's "The Star Dwellers" in February, 1982, the first text page was headed "Forward" -- but when it did Blish's "Mission to the Heart Stars" in March, 1982, the word was correctly spelled "Foreword".

You'll notice I said Avon learned "to spell better," not "to spell." I'm glad its editors caught on to "Foreword" before it reprinted "Asimov on Science Fiction" in April, 1982, because there are 55 Forewords, more or less, in that book, and I am sure 55 misspellings would be more than even the good-hearted Isaac Asimov could forgive. (I don't call him "the good doctor," you observe. More about that later.)

Back to Avon. Fortunately for its editors, there are only four Afterwords in the Asimov book and they managed to get three of them right. The one on page 245 is spelled "Afterward." That's why I can't yet say Avon has learned to spell; three out of four isn't good enough for people in the word business. And I hope the Avon editors aren't confused if they get to reprint Dr. Robert L. Forward.

I've been giving you examples of what I call Dingalinglish -- goofs by people who ought to know better. The NEW YORK TIMES, for instance, which once managed to spell "naphtha" three different ways on the same page. One was right. Even Time Inc.'s empire has developed seepage. It used to be impeccable, wordwise, but now we find a television commercial for SPORTS ILLUSTRATED using "phenomena" for the singular "phenomenon" and a

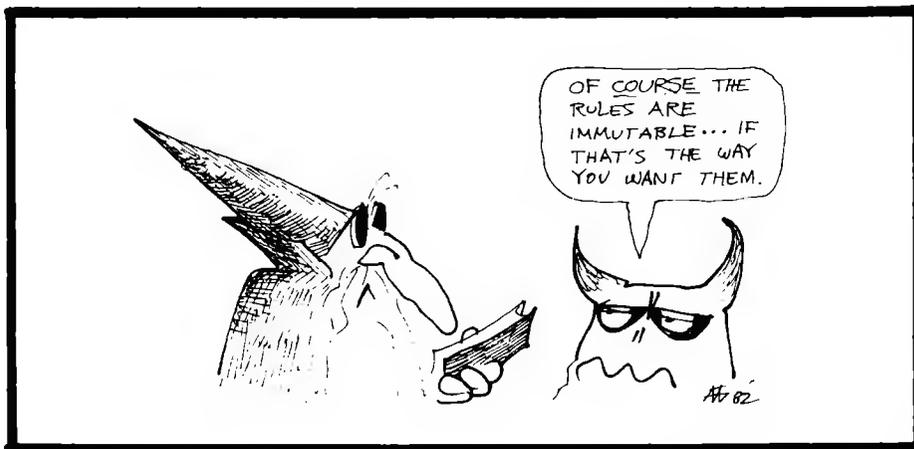
book reviewer in DISCOVER Magazine spelling Grosset & Dunlap with two t's. Every Tom Swift reader knows better!

Enough of that. The science fiction magazines have literate editors, it seems to me -- though I have bones to pick with a couple of big semi-professional ones that shall be nameless here.

So far I have not been talking about not writing science fiction. A good way not to is to get paranoid about what an editor might do to your story. Most editors, like our own I. Asimov and his dear associates, will not change your story except to

I know how they work. At the time I wrote, the senior wire service reporter ended the press conference by saying, "Thank you, Mr. President,"

whereupon he and his colleagues dashed to the press room, picked up direct-line telephones to their offices and cried, "Bulletin," or as in my story when there was supreme news, "Flash!" They did not, as the AMAZING editor edited my copy, yell, "Grab a sharp pencil!" In the first place the reporter dictates to an editor who has been seated at a teletype machine with earphones on, waiting for the call. In the second and every other place, it would be a stupid line of dialog even in a Grade Z



make it better by fixing spelling and punctuation. If they think more than that needs work they get in touch and suggest. Usually you agree, and the change is for the better. But there are other editors, who change words, phrases and paragraphs, even titles, without your leave.

Horace Gold, then editor of GALAXY, changed an item on a grocery list that had something to do with a story of mine. I had listed the item as "toilet paper." Horace changed it to "toilet tissue." I wonder if he thought "paper" was a dirty word.

At AMAZING STORIES an editor whose name I can't recall changed the title of a story of interplanetary contact from my "Press Conference" to "Visitor From the Void." The press conference was at the White House; at it the President of the United States spoke of his meeting with the extraterrestrial visitor. I've covered White House press conferences;

1930s movie.

Another way not to write is to sell a story to Harlan Ellison and wait for it to be published in THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS. You sit and wait with visions of rave reviews, foreign and other subsidiary sales, a movie or television option, fame and money, money, money. You wait and wait. Ah, well. The story I'm talking about, "At the Sign of the Boar's Head Nebula" (Shall I take out the word Nebula? Would the word jinx a nomination or an award?), was at one time only a gleam in my eye, a fragment no one was interested in until Harlan saw 17,000 words of it. He liked it and demanded more. It grew and grew and in 1969 it was 40,000 or 47,000 words long, depending on who was counting, and Harlan bought it. He's still got it. I heard the book will be out real soon now. It's only 13 years later, so I really shouldn't complain. You don't hear me complaining, do you?

You can set up a block against

writing by worrying about the science you're going to have to use in it. We're back to my text for today. You've got to know your science, it says. Boy, is that a stopper for me. I was too intimidated by science to read SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. I'd flunked intermediate algebra in my last semester in high school and my first in college (and then dropped out of college for a decade). What I did was wander through bookstores, looking for something that might inspire me. In those days there was a store on 42nd Street in Manhattan near Sixth Avenue, where all books were 19¢ each. Most of them were remainders, or from Vanity Presses, but at that price you could spend a buck and get ideas galore. I remember one word -- from a sort of theosophical self-help book: *duoverse*. It was new to me so I gave it a meaning different from the old author's and stuck it in a story I was writing. "Duoverse?" I had one of my characters say. "That's what keeps time travelers from running into themselves." That's about all the science I had in the story and at 2¢ a word, that phrase alone paid for the book.

Still another way to duck having to make my story scientifically accurate or even plausible is to let the protagonist be a person as much a scientific ignoramus as I am. Thus he, in character, can say dumb things which are plausible for the kind of person he is, but which I as a supposedly knowledgeable and conscientious science fiction writer would be embarrassed to say directly myself.

In a story I'm not writing now (because I'm doing this talk instead) my protagonist, for example, is a radio station manager who would score 7 1/2 on a science quiz. He tells the story in the first person and makes it clear that it happened many years ago and is part of the mythology of the area -- which happens to be the North Country of this state. The story -- which I have been not writing since 1971 but which might be finished this year -- is about a caveman and a spaceship along with other unlikely combinations ... but look not to it for your scientific advancement, if anybody ever buys it. I hope it will be entertaining, though.

This is what I also hope for a series of short spoofs in which my protagonist is frankly called Harry Protagonist. He's a deadpan cartoonist who brazenly makes use of such non-scientific material as Alfred Jarry's somewhat surrealistic pataphysique -- the "science of imaginary solutions."

I thought Isaac Asimov had used the term imaginary science fiction

in his book, but I can't find it again, wherever he said it, if he said it. If I don't make notes when I first read something it all runs together; sometimes this is good because it runs together into a story, but mostly it's just a pain to be so absent-minded.

In deference to the academic atmosphere that surrounds us I'll refer to our toastmaster as Prof. Asimov. "I still teach through my books and lectures," he said in that handbook, "Asimov on Science Fiction," and indeed he has taught me much in his articles and columns. I may choose to ignore the teachings in my fiction -- or ignore them through ignorance and a bad memory -- but that is another matter.

Prof. Asimov's doctorate is in the highest kind of learning -- philosophy, higher even than science. We know this to be so because the Ph.D. is an earned degree, hard-earned, whereas most Doctor of Science degrees are honorary. Thus we must admit that philosophy is superior to science and pay attention to what the philosophers tell us, among them Britains' Bertrand Russell and his Austrian-born pupil, Ludwig Wittgenstein.

A splendid way not to write is to do a lot of research, especially research in subjects of no earthly, or even extraterrestrial, use to you. I spent some time in Bird Library, where my current job is to complete a volume of the history of Syracuse University, researching Wittgenstein -- or, as his literary executrix, G.E.M. Anscombe, calls him sometimes, WTG. She's British, so she probably doesn't know that the initials WTG mean to me W.T. Grant, which I and certain other parties with long memories knew as a five-and-ten-cent store before it got delusions of grandeur, expanded exponentially and went bankrupt.

I digress. I see a note to myself -- "Segue to WTG and the present King of France." Do you know that "segue," that great musician's term, is from the Italian and means, "Play the following like the preceding"? That's one of the things I learned in Bird Library when I was surprised to find that pteranodon is spelled the way it is, with four syllables, and has no pteeth. That is p-t-e-e-t-h, and it's funnier in print. Or maybe it's the pterosaur that has no teeth. Anyway, one of them is from the Greek words for wing and toothless.

Segue, segue. Wittgenstein. I love him. So far I haven't read him -- The TIMES of London calls him "notoriously difficult" -- but Miss

Anscombe has, and I've read her book AN INTRODUCTION TO WITTGENSTEIN'S TRACTATUS. Well, I've read most of it ... some of it. She's difficult too, but she often points out where WTG is wrong, which is comforting to know, especially when he raises the possibility that "what is false can be true."

She also tells us that what WTG means is not always what he says, and that he gives meanings to certain words such as "tautology" that are not what other people mean by them. So it's good to have her forewarn us if we intend to read him directly.

I don't mean to get deep into this subject -- and "deep" is the word I want -- but there are things WTG says, filtered through Miss Anscombe, that are terrific catalysts to the writing of science fiction -- or to the thinking about writing, if you want to procrastinate about getting to the typewriter. Here's one: "The meaning of the world must lie outside the world. In the world ev-



everything is as it is, everything happens as it does happen; there is no value in it -- if there were any, it would have no value." As Robert Shaw playing the gangster in THE STING says, "You follow?" I don't, but I think it's delicious. That's from page 170 of the Harper Torchbook second edition.

Earlier (page 169) he spoke of "the feeling of being dependent on an alien will." How's that for a thought variant? It's the very stuff that the covers of the old ASTOUNDING STORIES were made of.

At page 53, WTG is quoted as saying, "Theories that make a proposition of logic appear substantial are always wrong." That's where "true" versus "false" being "two properties among other properties" comes in, and it's where I go out, because if I continue to page 59, I'll find Miss Anscombe saying her man has been considering "facts that, taken

together, would tend to shew that there was no such person as Moses."

I suspect that this is the higher logic and that I'm not getting from it what I should. But what I am getting is a glimmering of an idea for a way to eliminate an extraneous character from a science fiction story without going back in time and killing his grandfather.

At another point (page 171), Miss Anscombe refers to Wittgenstein's use of the word Aufgabe, which I suppose is pronounced owf-gob-uh and which she translates as meaning "the task set," as in a child's homework. I prefer to think of it as pronounced owf-gabe -- gabe as in Gabriel -- and translated as outgrabe, which is what Lewis Carroll said the mome raths did.

So, lest you think I'm making fun of Wittgenstein -- which I'm not because there are more ideas in him than W.T. Grant had notions -- I'll give you one last quotation. It's from the last page of Miss Anscombe's book, quoting WTG talking about his own book and saying in his introduction: "The whole meaning of the book could perhaps be summed up as follows: What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what cannot be spoken of we must be silent about."

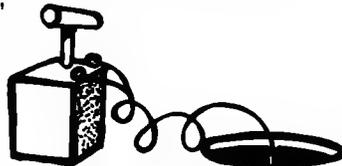
I'll buy that. I'll keep quiet if you will.

I'll bet you thought I forgot about the King of France. This is a reference to Bertrand Russell's theory of descriptions, which influenced WTG. There's a whole chapter on this and in it Miss Anscombe maintains that "the author of Waverley" and "the present King of France" are definite descriptions, whereas "a man" is an indefinite description. I say "the present King of France" is no more a definite description than is a rainsoaked and windblown sign on a telephone pole that you know is a week old but says "Garage Sale Today." There's another part of the chapter where she discusses the truth or falsity of the sentence "Some man has been on the moon." I think I know enough by now to know that what's true may be false, but it's interesting to note that Miss Anscombe's book was published in 1959--and to wonder if there was a philosophical (and therefore superscientific) moon landing a decade or more earlier than the one we orthodox types remember.

Not as provocative as Wittgenstein but far more fun to read is that scientist-philosopher-mathematician Bertrand Russell. He's written a book, THE ABC OF RELATIVITY, that makes Einstein's theories as clear as any layman can expect. But he al-

so has ironic, witty iconoclastic views on almost everything that lead you, as a science fiction writer, to wonder if there's anything more to be said.

Russell is a great comfort to anyone who feels he has to keep up with the very latest scientific theories lest some editor or critic chide you for your ignorance. Russell reminds us that these, too, may be discarded. He recalls, for instance, that Aristotle believed women had fewer teeth than men -- but "although he was twice married, it never occurred to him to verify this statement by examining his wives' mouths."



And he had words of advice for young professors: "I suggest to young professors that their first work should be written in a jargon only to be understood by the erudite few. With that behind them, they can ever after say what they have to say in a language 'understood of the people.' In these days, when our very lives are at the mercy of the professors, I cannot but think that they would deserve our gratitude if they adopted my advice."

Speaking of a young professor --

Long before the creationists of our time irritated Professor Asimov into replying to them in the pages of the NEW YORK TIMES magazine, the arguments of anti-evolutionists were heard. One such argument was that the world was created in 4004 B.C., complete with fossils, which were inserted to try our faith. I laughed at this naive way of thinking until I read Bertrand Russell who said, and I quote: "There is no logical impossibility about this view. And similarly there is no logical impossibility in the view that the world was created five minutes ago, complete with memories and records. This may seem an improbable hypothesis, but it is not logically refutable." Unquote.

So maybe all we can say about Professor Asimov's admirable article in the TIMES is that it disputed the creationist view, but did not refute it.

I think the creationists are all wet myself, but I also think their ingenious explanations are wonderful spurs to a writer's imagination, providing alternate ways of looking at things -- even if only plotwise.

Does this make me come on as anti-science? And if it does should

I turn in my Royal Standard and stop writing the stuff that is published every now and again, despite all my procrastination, in a science fiction magazine? No, because I'm not in it for the money or to educate people, or to show off, but for the fun of it. I don't have to write to formula as I thought I had to to sell when I started in the 1930s and '40s. And after October 30th, I won't have to write for Syracuse University as I've been doing for 18 years (and did for wire services and newspapers before that). I won't have to write at all but, of course I will because I always have, starting with my pre-SF days when as a pre-teenager I was published in the Sunday children's section of the LONG ISLAND DAILY PRESS.

So a good way not to write is to have written. A few years ago the Science Fiction Writers of America were wondering how to amend the criteria for membership so as not to bar those who had not written or published science fiction in recent years -- under the rules in force at the time Isaac Asimov could not have been a member. One suggestion was that publication of a certain number of words of SF in one's lifetime -- a million words, some thought -- would qualify. I went to my card file and found that I half qualified; I'd then written something over 500,000 words. With even a modest backlog like that the averages are on your side when the anthology editors come looking, and especially when Professor Asimov and his colleagues on far-off campuses, Professor Martin Greenberg of the University of Wisconsin and Professor Joseph Olander of the University of Texas, are seeking short-shorts. Lots of my stuff is short and they took seven of my stories for their two volumes. So a good way to stay in print is to have the Asimov name on your spine. I mean the Asimov name on the spine of the book that anthologized you.

I'm going to conclude with a story. I told it originally as the afterword to my first novel when Ballantine published it in 1955. It must be a good story because I saw it again just this year in READER'S DIGEST. It wasn't original with me, I hasten to disclaim, but a variation of it would make an ideal science fiction story. It's about three deaf old English ladies on a bus. One says, "Is this Wembley?" "No," says the second, "this is Thursday." "So am I," says the third. "Let's all get off and have a drink."

Each of the women is being perfectly logical but the result is confusion and a happy ending.

More I cannot wish you.

LARRY NIVEN

A Profile By Charles Platt

(c) 1983 by Charles Platt

"I would say that we're the most successful collaboration in science fiction history," Larry Niven remarks of his partnership with Jerry Pournelle. "Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth were good; they did as well as was possible in the science fiction field of their time. But today is different. Today you can sell to an audience a hundred times as large. And that means, incidentally, you can spend more time on each piece of work.

He speaks decisively, leaving no doubt that he knows exactly what he is talking about. At the same time, he's very relaxed, almost bored, as if he wouldn't bother to argue if anybody started disagreeing with him. He has the bland equanimity of someone from a wealthy family who has gone on to make his own small fortune on top of theirs. If nothing seems to bother Larry Niven very much these days, that's hardly surprising.

"When I first started writing there seemed zero chance that I would make serious money out of it. I was doing it as a hobby; my real profession was counting the money in the trust funds I inherited. I wrote science fiction because it just happened that that was where my ideas were coming. All I wanted out of it was a Hugo Award. What I achieved was way beyond my ambitions.

"Even now, I'm not in this for the money; we'd be living in a smaller, less comfortable house without it, but I mainly use the money to keep score of how many people I've reached. I'm talking to a lot of people -- my audience is over a million. And I'd like to talk to a lot more."

Perhaps this sounds self-satisfied. Perhaps, if you're a struggling starving author measuring out your dinner of boiled beans in your crumbling cold-water tenement, Niven's attitude is the sort of thing that makes you more than a little angry. From your point of view, times are tough; the American publishing industry is no healthier than any other industry at this time of economic recession, so it's even harder to sell your work than it used to be, and even when a publisher does

buy one of your novels, not much money changes hands.

The truth is that, on the whole, this has always been a low-paying field. A typical novel only earns its writer \$5,000 or so, and many writers refer to science fiction bitterly as a literary ghetto.

So how is it that Larry Niven has come to be rewarded so highly, and read so widely, while most others struggle to get by?

For a start, Niven rejects defeatist talk about the so-called ghetto. "I dislike that phrase. I suggest you adopt the phrase 'science fiction country club' and see where we get.

"Look at the parameters of a country club. It's expensive to be there, but it does have certain advantages. One is the company of your peers and another is the chance to make business deals conveniently. All of this is true of science fiction.

"The expense of being a member is -- well, the royalty advances are low, science fiction receives a limited amount of critical acclaim and very little publicity. This does cost you money.

"But the company of your peers? Damned straight. And the opportunities to make business deals are very real. All you've got to do is go to a science fiction convention and you will meet all the people you want to deal with. To the new writer, that's a godsend.



"It's utterly true that the new writer won't make a million dollars on his first novel in science fiction. But the science fiction label guarantees that he'll sell a minimum of, let's say, 40,000 to 100,000 copies. People will buy it just because it's science fiction.

"Here's the real advantage. You can always step outside the science fiction country club to make a little money, once you've gotten yourself established. John D. MacDonald did it right. He started in science fiction, made a name for himself, enough money to keep going and presently went to the mainstream.

"Niven and Pournelle did the same thing, except that they didn't stop writing science fiction. They just started selling to the mainstream audience as well."

He says this as if nothing could have been simpler. And the way he talks about himself in the third person accentuates his air of serene detachment.

He agrees, however, that there was a little luck involved in his early success.

"I got started in the heart of the 'new wave' period, in the late 1960s. This was one of the best pieces of good fortune that I could have asked for. In that period, the 'new wave' looked really good to all the new writers, who were interested in experimenting and getting away from old-style science fiction. The only new writer who didn't go along with that, and stuck with solid stories of the Poul Anderson model, was Larry Niven.

"Algis Budrys was the first guy to notice Larry Niven as a good thing in the field. He said something like, 'Larry Niven makes you feel as if it's important whether the main character gets killed.' Nobody else was doing that.

"Some of the critics of that time, of course, did not like what I was doing. I had to wonder whether these critics were right. But when Damon Knight turned down 'Inconstant Moon' for ORBIT, in exactly the form in which it went on to win a Hugo award -- I knew Damon was wrong before the awards came up. I knew how valuable that story was. I knew how



well I'd written it. And I stopped taking Damon seriously as a critic.

"Okay, that's for Damon Knight. As regards James Blish, I do not give great weight to his comments on RINGWORLD, which were that it would probably win a Hugo but it shouldn't.

"I admit, I felt picked on by the critics. Or rather -- I felt ignored, and that's worse. And what I told myself then I guess I still tell myself now: If I need a critic to explain a story for me to the reader, then there's something wrong with the way I wrote it."

Like other writers I've met who have become very commercially successful, Larry Niven shows more respect for his readers than his critics.

"I'm very keenly aware of the obligation I owe to anyone who buys one of my books. When I was fifteen, I spent a month with my dad and some other people in Carmel. The TV set got only one channel, and it wasn't very interesting, so I tried being a storyteller. And it was glorious. But I could see it was easy to lose the attention of all those other fifteen-year-olds.

"Okay, now I'm expecting people to pay me honest-to-god money for my storytelling. I'm still keenly aware of how easy it is to lose that audience.



"I grew up among mundanes. When I say 'mundanes' it's not pejorative, it's a short way of saying 'people who never look to the sky for anything other than to tell the time.' And sometimes not even that.

"The whole world I knew was like that when I was in my teens. The people who think like science fiction fans, in terms of a future that is different from the present, have grown in numbers by leaps and bounds since then. It's been a series of jumps: Sputnik, the Russian men in space, the American men in space, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, the Moon program, STAR TREK, STAR WARS -- each of these caused a surge in the number of people willing to listen to ideas such as the ones I use.

"I have profited enormously, but so has the rest of the world, because we do now think in terms of projecting problems, finding solutions, looking for the ideas that can create the technology that can solve the problems.

"There still are the mundanes, of course. Most of the populace still doesn't bother with this kind of stuff. They expect, and would feel more comfortable in, a future which is just like the present. But I am not talking to those people. I am trying to talk to the people who are ready to know that the future will be different from the present.

"When I decide to write a story, I can get the feel for what kind of audience it will call for. A novel like PROTECTOR includes enormously complex games played with sociology, anthropology and space travel. The audience for that one is small, has a very high I.Q. and a very good education. Okay, that's who I was writing to in that one and I can resist making concessions with the language for such people and I can skip over some ideas that they already know. They have the education or they would not be reading the book.

"With LUCIFER'S HAMMER it was different. A very simple idea, here; there's nothing really complex about the description of a comet hitting the Earth. With that simple an idea I've got a potentially very large audience. And I have to explain even the simplest concepts to them, or I'm not doing them justice."

I ask him how he made the transition from writing mainly short stories, solo, to writing best-selling collaborative epics.

"My collaboration with Jerry began like this: We had met a few times at social events, because Jerry has been a science fiction fan

longer than I have, back when he was working on the space program, essentially creating the field of space medicine, wiring astronauts with all kinds of instruments.

"He and I got talking one time after a science fiction convention and he started talking about collaboration.

"I'd done a collaborative novel with David Gerrold and enjoyed myself a lot. 'Let's try it again,' I said to myself; but what I was really saying was, 'Let's keep talking about it,' because talk is cheap and talk is recreation.

"We set up a date for Jerry to come over one night after dinner. I dug something out of my files: an alien I'd been calling 'Cross-hatcher', designed for a novel that fell apart two-thirds of the way through.

"One of the first things Jerry said was, 'This book can't be in Known Space. I can't believe in Known Space; it doesn't follow sociological principles that I know are valid.'

"I said okay -- I didn't want him in Known Space, anyway. I don't let anybody into Known Space. It's my private domain.

"He told me about his future-history, the empire he'd been working in. He'd published some stories in it; 'The Mercenary' was one, I think. I could see he had a fully human empire, with no alien intelligences. This struck me as pretty dull.

"I realized that I could put an alien planet in the middle of his empire. I tossed the alien into the pot. And we had a hell of a night. I introduced him to brandy and coffee, which gets you drunk without putting you to sleep, and we drank brandy and coffee all night, and by the time we finished we had elaborated and extrapolated and made vast amounts of notes, and we set to work."

And from this, of course, came THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE, which was more successful for Niven than any of his other work had been.

Since then, however, he's proved that his own fiction can be just as successful. THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS was a recent example.

"I was mightily surprised by the success of RINGWORLD ENGINEERS. Sequels to successful books are generally not as good as the original, and maybe they don't sell as many copies, total, because their real audience is restricted to people who remember reading the first one. But what does happen is that the sequel to a successful book sells in one lump. So RINGWORLD ENGINEERS was on

the paperback best-seller list for a month, in mainstream."

This was classic hard-science, high-tech Niven -- the kind of problem-solving fiction for which he's famous. He had written fantasy novels too, however. As a serious advocate of science and space technology, I can't help wondering how he can produce fantasies which could actually encourage people to reject science and turn away from real life problems.

"If the fantasy weren't there those people would be reading nothing, and watching television and I think that would be mildly worse. Fantasy does show a world that is different from our world and it does stretch people's imaginations. So I'm not against it. I'm not even against the kind of sword-and-sorcery which is very popular now. There are vast numbers of people out there taking approaches that I wouldn't take, but I'm reluctant to stop them. I wouldn't even stop Ralph Nader. Nader has done a great deal of damage to America's ability to become power-sufficient. He's against the



building of any kind of atomic power stations anywhere, apparently. And he is a mighty voice; he is listened to. But I got hit from behind while my car was at a stoplight, a while back. I got out, and here is this woman cringing in her driver's seat and a McDonald's hamburger on the floor. She had tried to save it from sliding off the seat at a point when she should have been stopping. Wham! Her car hit me fairly hard. But I've got a headrest, right? So I'm not whiplashed. And there was no damage to my car, because of the shock-absorbing bumpers. I have Ralph Nader to thank for that."

But I thought Niven was a conservative, in favor of Reagan-style deregulation.

"Yes, I'm certainly more in accord with them than with Ralph Nader. But I think they should both keep talking."

Is this a free-for-all libertarian outlook?

"No. Libertarianism is a form of anarchy and they can put up some pretty good arguments, but it turns

out that I can shoot holes in their arguments most of the time."

And to prove his point, as in the previous example, he argues from something that happened to him personally. I get the feeling that whereas Jerry Pournelle reaches conclusions by examining the big sweep of history, Larry Niven works on a much more direct, day-to-day basis.

"I was in Houston, Texas, in a restaurant near the center of town, in a bad neighborhood, with Marilyn in a fur coat, both of us looking expensive. It was getting late, and we kept trying to call taxis to take us back to our hotel, but the taxis never showed up and we finally got a taxi company to admit that they just wouldn't send a cab to where we were. Period. So you can guess now that I have no real confidence in the libertarian method.

"If a taxi driver can choose not to go to a certain part of town, that perfectly fits the libertarian philosophy, but it leaves me in a hell of a lot of trouble. So I want a certain amount of regulation, simply to protect my own interests."

Is this a kind of law-and-order outlook?

"Yes, it is. The people who call themselves law-and-order advocates want a great deal more regulation than I do, but I see where regulations make things easier. Licensing taxis is good. Traffic lights are good. The Food and Drug Administration is good, if they'll do their job, which includes getting useful drugs on the market."

What about regulations that legislate equality?

"I would think 'equal before the law' is as much equality as we would want to legislate. After all, someone who has obeyed the law should not be equal to someone who has not obeyed the law, in the eyes of the law. That's what the law is for;

it's set up to create inequalities, to some extent."

To what extent should rewards be unequal?

"Put it this way. The administration seems to be returning tax breaks to the people who actually pay the taxes. And there is a lot of yelling from people who seem to think that this is a new and radical and dangerous idea. Well -- I'm for it!"

This leads him into a little lecture on economics -- with space industrialization as the lesson to be learned.

"The way we're handling currency problems now creates inflation. That leads, in the end, to poverty. There are two ways to deal with this. One is a hell of a lot of work: You stop printing more money, and mean it.

"Japan took that route and the result of course, was a decade of not much money. And then they got used to the idea that the government really meant what they said. That is easier for a Japanese to grasp than it is for an American -- Americans are less likely to believe what their government tells them -- so if we take this route, we can expect a couple of decades of real horror. It'd be fourteen dollars for a steak and nobody would have the fourteen dollars, until the butcher finally decided that the government really meant it, and would not print any more money, at which point he would lower the price of steak to seven dollars. That would end inflation.

"The other approach is to create actual new wealth. If you do that, then you can keep up with the new money that's being printed.

"This sounds kind of vague and nebulous, so let me get concrete. I bring an asteroid into near orbit around the Earth. I mine it for all





the metals, and I ship them down. I sell the metals. Now the inflationary spiral isn't doing anyone any harm.

"Not long ago, the Citizen's Advisory Council on National Space Policy met at this house under Jerry Pournelle's guidance. About thirty-odd of us, including three science fiction writers. Our purpose was to carve out a detailed space program for the United States and present it. We have no authority, of course, but at least we had guarantees that certain people would listen.

"We pushed for a total tax break for products brought back from space until the year 2000 -- that's obvious. Not so obvious is rewriting the laws regarding what happens to money plowed into space. These regulations are a little fuzzy, a little vague. A corporation lawyer trying to tell a corporation president what will be the result if he does thus-and-so is in a hell of a bind if the laws are vague. And there's no cost to the taxpayer in making these laws hard and rigid, using unambiguous language. So we pushed that idea very hard.

"Then there are the space treaties. Not just the Moon Treaty, which hasn't been signed, but earlier treaties that were signed. They all seem designed to keep free enterprise out of space. We have got to get out of those.

"Our basic aims are very simple.

In the near term, we want to save civilization and make a little money. In the far term, we want all the pollution-producing factories out in space and the Earth made into one great big park."

He sounds just as definite, talking about this, as he sounded when he was talking about the science fiction country club. It's hard to imagine Larry Niven expressing self-doubt or misgivings, just as it's hard to imagine him getting very agitated over anything.

After we have talked for ninety minutes or so, he shows me around his home. He and his wife live in the hills above Tarzana, north-west of Los Angeles. It's a quiet location, surrounded with lush vegetation and not too many neighbors.

The house is dramatically modern, a series of huge spaces linked by big archways offset from one another so that the perspectives keep changing as you move from room to room. The living room, where the taping took place, has big windows of tinted-brown glass, a long, soft, ample couch and a ceiling two stories high. We walk through a central dining area like a modernist baronial hall where eight high-backed chairs stand around a long glass-topped table. He leads me up to his office, where there are the usual writer's bookshelves, a photocopying machine and a comfortably upholstered chrome swivel chair in front of a word-processing system. Niven prints out a copy of his bibli-

ography for me while I look out at the swimming pool and patio at the rear of the house.

Before I leave, he talks a little more about his own role in science fiction.

"I continue to benefit from the growing audience of people who think that the future will be different from the present, and who think that this is a good thing," he says.

I mention that New York publishers seem to think that the readership for science fiction is diminishing at present, rather than expanding.

"That is true. What happened is that the field pulsed wide open and then contracted. A lot of the STAR WARS audiences went out looking for books to give them more of the same, but then they found -- oh, my book, PROTECTOR, and it was too complicated for them, or Barry Malzberg, and it was a critical treatise being sold as a novel, or Samuel Delany, and it wasn't comprehensible. You can expect that two-thirds of them, at least, got turned off by whatever it was they came across.

"When the field contracts, the new writer is in a hell of a bad shape. But you see, those writers who are at the top of the field, in terms of money and audience, aren't hurt at all." He smiles cheerfully, and puffs on his pipe, as unruffled as ever.

Editor's Note: The profile of Larry Niven, and last issue's profile of Keith Laumer, and next issue's profile of Janet Morris, will be included in the second volume of Charles Platt's DREAM MAKERS, in May (I understand) from Berkley. The first volume of profiles/interviews is available at \$2.75 and is an exceptionally interesting and revealing book.

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is available
in microform.

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OTHER VOICES

DHAMPIRE

By Scott Baker
Pocketbooks

REVIEWED BY JOHN SHIRLEY

For a while, I was wondering if it were possible to write a refreshing, original tale of the supernatural -- one involving vampires, witches and demons, the classic elements. It had all been done, it seemed to me. I was wrong: Scott Baker has resurrected the Undead, the secret cabal, the power-mad Satanist, and has made them dance in unfamiliar choreographies.

Baker is best known for SYMBIOTE'S CROWN (Berkley) which won France's Prix Apollo Award for Best SF novel.

He brings the flair for believable characterization and intricate inventiveness he showed in SYMBIOTE'S CROWN to DHAMPIRE. A Dhampire, Baker tells us, is a nonvampire who controls vampires, and who draws power from their thievery of lifeblood and life-force. When he dies, he becomes a vampire and is controlled in turn by another Dhampire, a successor in his own family. The novel's protagonist is the owner of a snake farm who uses his snakes to smuggle cocaine through customs, until someone from his mysterious family, The Bathorys -- a family of Dhampires and vampires, he learns, descended from the Countess Bathory and Vlad the Impaler -- kills his lover via supernatural manipulation of a particularly venomous snake and then, as part of a power-through-sex ritual, causes him to make love to his long-lost sister who is a representative of a Hindu snake cult involved in the family's arcane power struggles which take place in secret underground sub-worlds where --

Sound painfully complicated? That's just the beginning! It would take 5,000 words to sketch in the general outline of this book's labyrinthine background detail and almost neurotically convoluted plot. Such paranoid machinations on the part of the author would be, in the hands of a lesser talent, tedious. But Baker is a major fantasy talent, just beginning to bloom, and the

richness of his imagery, the powerful narrative momentum, and the tantalus of new revelations seething always just under the surface, carry us through. We can overlook the occasional muddled sentence, the expository lumps, because we know that just beyond each hurdle are fresh wonders.

Conceptually, Baker takes us from old vampirism to a new sort, from this into the fine points of Satanism and its weird interdependence with Christianity; from Christianity seen skewed and in a new, revealing light, into its secret otherworld conflict with the powers of the Hindu pantheon. This is a strange paranoid book with many curious ancestors; the vision of John Milton is there, and something of Aleister Crowley's MOONCHILD; something of Lawrence Durrell's BLACK BOOK is there and also the wicked colors from Moorcock's paintbrush, the ghost of Eric hovering in the background. This is not a "horror" story -- it's a novel of supernatural suspense, and allegory.

Fiercely and fascinatingly erotic, perverse, blood-drenched, imperfect but engaging, DHAMPIRE is a feast for the fantasy fan.

THE NONBORN KING

By Julian May
Houghton Mifflin, XLI
397 pp., 1983, \$16.95

REVIEWED BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

The NONBORN KING is the third volume in the Pliocene Quartet

that began with THE MANY-COLORED LAND and THE GOLDEN TORC and concludes with THE ADVERSARY.

After the destruction wrought by events chronicled in THE GOLDEN TORC, the Tanu attempt to put their civilization back together. The human trouble-maker, Aiken Drum (the Nonborn King of the title), makes a move to take over the Tanu throne. He is opposed by many factions including Felice Landry, a very powerful, very mad human metaphysic, and conservative members of the Tanu. I will not say anything more about the plot. (The blurb that accompanied the uncorrected proofs from Houghton Mifflin gave away too much of it.)

THE NONBORN KING marks May's continued growth and maturity as a novelist. There is a surety about her handling of the characters and narrative that was muted in the two previous books. The prose in THE NONBORN KING is as rich as ever, but more under control. The humor that made the two previous books so enjoyable is also present. May has always included multiple levels of meaning in her work and if you look you'll find it; but for those who just want an exciting story, THE NONBORN KING is certainly that.

When THE MANY-COLORED LAND first came out, I said I was going to nominate it for a Hugo. I did. I believe THE NONBORN KING, like THE GOLDEN TORC, deserves serious consideration at award time.

LOST WORLDS

By Lin Carter
DAW #398, 176 pp., 1980, \$1.95

REVIEWED BY MARK WILLARD

This is an anthology of eight stories set in fabled, or lost, lands of Earth: Atlantis, Mu, Hyperborea,



Lemuria, Antillia, and so on. The two longest -- a little less than half the book -- feature Carter's S&S hero Thongor; the others feature various characters and stylistic backgrounds. There's a Lovecraftian tale, one reminiscent of Jack Vance's "Morreion", some "posthumous collaborations" with Clark Ashton Smith and Robert E. Howard, and the usual (for Carter) first installment of a new story- or novel-cycle.

It's been said of Lin Carter that his tremendous enjoyment of and enthusiasm for the sword-and-sorcery and fantasy fields go a long way to atone for whatever his works may lack in technical polish and absolute first-line quality. I'd call most of the tales in this volume enjoyable though not memorable, and perhaps best not read all at one sitting -- the Thongor stories are the only ones where the author's enthusiasm becomes a mite obtrusive, and the tone is a bit too gung-ho for credibility. While this volume barely skims Carter's prodigious output, I'd call it a good introductory book for those interested.

THE MAN WHO HAD NO IDEA

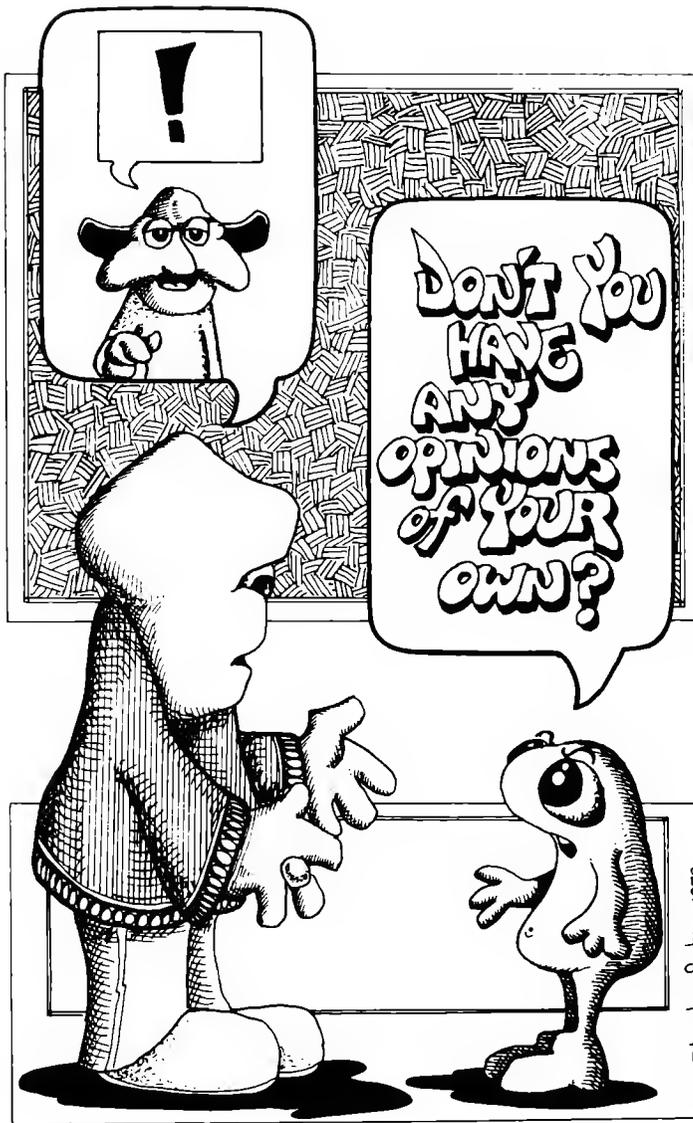
By Thomas M. Disch
Bantam Books, 232 pp., \$2.95

REVIEWED BY ALLEN VARNEY

It's probably useless to review Thomas Disch's new story collection in these pages, for everyone in fandom has undoubtedly already decided where he stands in the matter of Disch. I think it's clear by now he's the finest writer in the field. But I also think no one will admit it until he's safely dead.

The problem we all have with Disch -- both fans and his fellow writers (especially those of the so-called "Labor Day Group") -- is that his very presence is an implied slight. He keeps producing brilliantly crafted, funny, sophisticated stories that as much as shout, "Fun is fun, but really, we're all grownups here. Let's act like it." This unstated commentary on the rest of the genre explains why Disch will never, ever win a Hugo or Nebula.

The best illustration of this point in the collection at hand is probably "Concepts," a story on Harlan Ellison's world of Medea. Many writers have done Medea stories, all featuring the strange alien races inhabiting it; but only Disch describes a hilarious attempt to convert the aliens to Catholicism. That's something you'll never find in Larry Niven.



© Brad W. Foster - 1978

Other notable successes in this volume include the title story, a romp about a social climber's quest for a conversation license; "Josie and the Elevator," a non-fairy-tale; the delightfully dumb (but serious proposal "Pyramids for Minnesota;" and, best of all, the collection's concluding entry, "Understanding Human Behavior." This perfect story of a man who has his memory erased keeps going in unexpected directions with the precision and inventiveness of a Wodehouse novel; until by the end, the reader feels the title is impressively appropriate. It's science fiction and literature and it's funny, all at once.

In fact, that's the best way to describe this whole book. Even (or especially) if you don't like depressing "New Wave" stories such as Disch has produced in the past, give this one a try.

THE DIMENSIONEERS

By Doris Piserchia
DAW, 1982, \$2.25

REVIEWED BY DEAN R. LAMBE

Hunger for the occasional adolescent rite-of-passage daring-do space opera? Most of us do from time to time, and most SF writers add to that larder at least once. Piserchia, with a fine track record in this area, offers a cut above SF junk food with a true, holding onto your disbelief suspenders, skipping through the corridors of alternate universes, loving that precocious spoiled brat, romp. It's "Podkayne of Mars" on a "Glory Road," complete with teleporting lions and a whole cast of white hats and black hats -- not to mention grey hats -- and it's fun.

Our un-named teenaged heroine easily tires of her orphanage school, and prefers to ride Wyala, a mutant lioness gambler, with whom she achieves telepathic access to D, the twist-

ed corridors of space-time. While hopping from world to world one day, the red-haired kid and her furry steed encounter a nasty lot of reptilian Kriff who start throwing glass bullets. In her escape from the Kriff, our saucy heroine discovers a band of human and alien rebel allies, who fight long odds to free the other worlds of D from Kriff domination.

Meanwhile back on Earth, Mrs. Asel, headmistress of the orphanage, plots to confine her AWOL charge to quarters, while the mysterious rich woman, Cornelia Ember, shows unusual interest in the gamboling gamber-ing girl. Toss in an angry Army General, a bad boy, a dog-faced man and a cut-em-off-at-the-pass rescue of Earth and you've got it. Enjoy.

CONTROL

By William Goldman
Delacorte, 1982, 305 pp., \$15.95

REVIEWED BY G.B. CHAMBERLAIN

Time-travel has made the NEW YORK TIMES. Written by the author of the spoof fairytale THE PRINCESS BRIDE and an impressive run of thrillers and screenplays, CONTROL was headlined on the front page of the BOOK REVIEW last April 25 as "How to Change the Past." The critic -- Evan Hunter, himself a sometime writer of SF -- found Goldman's unannounced use of three separate time frameworks hard to follow. Seasoned science fiction readers shouldn't.

The premise: Suppose the Soviets were into psychic research; thanks to the "moonshot mentality," so would we be. (Hasn't the Pentagon funded odder projects?) Suppose isolated individuals -- usually "insanely difficult" kids or childlike mentally disturbed adults -- could psychically contact and control people in the past. "We can go to 1917 and kill Trotsky -- we can zap the Russian Revolution before it goes anywhere -- we can win it all!" But first, a controlled experiment . . .

Back in the Pyrite Period (1940-55), the rest was routine; one installment for the experiment, three for the thrilling action, plus an Astounding switch ending. For Mr. Goldman, the premise is all but the conclusion. He focuses not on how the project works out (I should tell you?) but on what it does to people caught up by it: the trapped young wife of a Wall Street moneyman; a Bloomingdale's matron post-humously recognized as a feminist; some crisply-drawn cops, shrinks, street people and government types. Not to forget -- who can? -- the psychic psychopath Bil-

ly Boy, 6-1 and 280, "an eerie shit sadist killer with the brain of a pea" who is a national treasure because when diverted under hypnosis from karate-chopping and rape, he can reach not only 1876 but 1917.

CONTROL takes some reading; Goldman lets you sort out the temporal settings by atmosphere, not dateline subtitles. What carries it is the people. Some years back, Ursula LeGuin pointed out the shortage of "Mrs. Browns" -- real human characters -- in modern science fiction; she named only two, one of whom -- Mr. Tagomi in THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE -- is spoiled for me by the hokiness of his "Oriental" background. She'll find more than that in CONTROL.

THE JEDI MASTER'S QUIZBOOK

Compiled by Rusty Miller
Del Rey, 1982, 135 pp., \$1.95

REVIEWED BY JOHN DIPRETE

I look at this book and say, "Why? Why'd they pick Rusty Miller?" Why choose an eleven-year-old to write a trivia book, instead of one of the dozens of pros who probably offered to write one?

Look at the promos -- it's obvious. Packaging. Publicity. Cosmetics. A cute little-boy-with-braces who gets As in school will catch the public's fancy. His 425 questions, which actually offer an excuse to depict idiosyncratic side-segments on the films (STAR WARS & THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK), should appeal to fans of the series. Let's face it: Rusty knows more than the Lucasfilm experts -- all rolled together. The latter were stumped repeatedly by the kid's quizzes.

But, hey -- no photos?

Miller gets an A for effort.

WORLD OF A THOUSAND COLORS

By Robert Silverberg
Arbor House, 1982, 329 pp., \$14.95

REVIEWED BY ANDREW ANDREWS

Nobody will disagree that it's hard to review a new Silverberg book with clean hands. His work is never a happy medium; it's demeaning or demanding and all different.

Even though I'm not pleased with the types of fantasy he writes these days, readers who agree will appreciate some rather dated, but still in-

spired Silverberg in WORLD OF A THOUSAND AND COLORS. In one way, it's an embarrassingly early collection of not-so-good stories, and others which were not missed, but some that have a certain maturity for their time, many published in the early 50s and 60s.

In "Something Wild is Loose," a hapless telepathic organism calling himself "Vsiir" accidentally boards an earthbound ship and comes in contact with six starship crewmen. The Vsiir almost kills them with its devastating telepathy. But the invisible kindly organism wants only to return to its homeworld. Ignorantly, it stumbles into an earth hospital and wreaks havoc, and only the telepathically latent Dr. Peter Mookherji and the comatic Latina can help it return. "Something Wild is Loose" is a touching, clumsy piece by Silverberg, but simply enriching. In "The Rain Peddler," TV at the turn of the century has become like Rome and bread-and-circuses, but instead of bearbaiting, blood-crazy viewers get to see and feel surgical operations with patients who are given no anesthesia. In "Going Down Smooth" a computer psychoanalyst is as disturbed as the emotional wrecks it analyzes. It is a software psychotic.

In "Neighbor," a planetary feud exists between Andrew McDermott and his keep and Michael Holt's castle. Both survive off each other's cold hatred, but weakly avoid a confrontation that will lead both to death. Tome Niles remembers everything in "The Man Who Never Forgot." He becomes an outcast because of his photographic memory . . . a prelude to Silverberg's DYING INSIDE? "How It Was When the Past Went Away" examines the aftermath of San Francisco as it copes with rampant amnesia in 2003, after a memory-wiping drug is dropped into the city's water supply. In the title story, Jolnar Hollinreid and Derveren Marti are competing for a chance to take the "Test" on the World of a Thousand Colors, discovered hundreds of years before by ex-



plorers reaching the far end of the universe. The Test is the final passage allowing humans and other sentient beings to live in a blissful, pure-energy form. However, the narrow and self-seeking Hollinrede devises a way to illegally take the Test, and faces the circumstances.

The stories are well worth your time.

DIFFERENT SEASONS

By Stephen King
Viking, 518 pp. + Afterword, \$16.95
0-670-27266-3, Jacket design by
R. Adelson; Jacket illustration by
Kinuko Y. Craft

REVIEWED BY PAUL MC GUIRE

The title is a gimmick. "Seasons" refers to the fact that the book contains four separate works, each of which has a subtitle containing the name of one of the seasons. Not only does the season named have nothing to do with the story, but "Fall" is not used to denote a season, and "Spring" appears as "Hope Springs Eternal." Well, it made for an attractive jacket painting. There is something different here. Not the seasons, but Stephen King himself.

Mr. King is one of those happy instances where great popularity is greatly deserved. He doesn't just tell stories, he creates realities in which stories take place. This is all the more amazing because Mr. King has chosen to write SF&F and horror. Not everyone would agree with that last opinion. To this day many people think those are second-class genres. Kid stuff. Mr. King has written a book for them. This novel (novels) is (are) mainstream. (Horror)! They are also very good.

"Rita Hayworth and Shawshak Redemption" (approx. 38,000 wds.) tells of a remarkable individual who is sent to prison on a life sentence. The first half of the story leisurely (but with enough hooks to open a bait and tackle shop) gives an anecdotal creation of the man's character and prison ambiance.

Just as the protagonist seems to have the system working for him and in the process be well on his way to becoming a Cool Hand Luke mythic figure, Mr. King, as in *THE STAND*, reveals that none of that is what the story is really about. Stephen King is one of the few novelists who knows how to get away with this, or would dare to try. The story, as it turns out, is about escape and -- something else.

That there will eventually be an

CAUTION: DO NOT PLAY THIS RECORD BACKWARDS!



escape is telegraphed very early on, long before a large hint is freely given, but getting there is so fascinating that it is all right. The escape method may be obvious, but the full scope isn't, and the epilogue is beautiful, touching and quietly profound.

There are a few minor criticisms I could make, but since I wouldn't get that picky on a commoner writer, I won't on a king. One is not minor. At one point, we are told that prison uniforms have no pockets. Later, an important piece of the story's resolution involves the protagonist's hands being in his pockets.

"Apt Pupil" (approx. 72,000 wds.) is about a grotesque symbiotic relationship between a Nazi war criminal and an all-American boy. The story is not one of fantast-horror, but of a horrible reality. Early on, the Nazi considers the boy to be a monster because he is so fascinated by the crimes. If one makes the connection that the reader is also the boy at that point, it becomes quite disturbing since "Apt Pupil" is one of Mr. King's most bloodcurdling tales. Perhaps the most frightening aspect is how convincing this story is that great evil and drastic consequences can stem from a minor chance encounter and then one thing just follows another.

Like in Thomas Tryon's *CROWNED HEADS*, the stories are tied together in various ways. A character from one will be briefly mentioned in another, an image or particular phrase or bit of business will be repeated and there is a subtle relationship between the themes. The first story is about convicts, the second about a former commandant of a concentration camp, the third about some young boy's confrontation with death and the fourth about birth. That is one way of looking at the thematic linkage. There are others.

Stephen King has set almost all of his writing in the same world. Science fiction, fantasy, horror and mainstream all exist and overlap in the world of Stephen King. "The Body" is set in Castle Rock, where the killings in *THE DEAD ZONE* took place and the area where *CUJO* went

rabid. Jerusalem's Lot is a short drive away.

In "The Body" (approx. 57,400 wds.), four boys learn that the body of a boy hit by a train is lying in the woods outside of town, and that the two boys they overheard talking about it are not going to tell anyone. Naturally, they decide to make an excursion out there to see it. The four boys in this adventure are of the type grown-ups will shake their heads over and wonder what will ever become of them. Poor kids. Tough. Bad-mouthed. Trouble makers. Normal American boys, in other words, the kind who grow up to be doctors, alcoholics, lawyers, factory workers or anything else, sometimes even writers. Mr. King remembers what it was like and can give a very good idea of that to his readers.

About a quarter of the way into this story, time is taken out to reprint the protagonist's first published story, written many years after the events of "The Body." Then the protagonist reviews that story, gets nostalgic about it, reveals he is now a best-selling author of horror novels whose bank book gets reviewed more than his novels, and gives a thought or three on the craft of writing. Then Mr. King picks up "The Body" where he left off. I think this is what you call your basic self-indulgence. In some other context I am sure it would have worked, but slapped in out of left field into this story, aside from Stephen King, who cares? Then 44 pages later, he does it again!

Even without the stories within the story, "The Body" uses too many words to tell what it has to say, but the majority of it was well worth reading.

"The Breathing Method" (approx. 25,000 wds.) quite appropriately and satisfyingly has stories within stories. Here Stephen King gives us his addition to the ranks of literature's clubs. This club is comprised of elderly gentlemen very like those in Peter Straub's *GHOST STORY*.

After describing his first Christmas meeting there and giving a few delectable hints as to the traditionally macabre tale told that night, Mr. King, after what is clearly mentioned as the second Christmas meeting, recounts a different story told that night and states it was the first Christmas tale he heard there. "The Breathing Method" is not another Christmas tale, but the best of the Christmas tales.

Well, now bozos at parties or what-not may stop saying things like "Sure, you give good horror, Stevie-Baby, but when are you going to grow up and do something serious?"

THE ARCHIVES

AFTER THE CRASH---SURVIVAL INVESTING DURING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF the 1980s By Geoffrey F. Albert. Signet, \$3.95

Revised and updated to 1982, this book sees radical changes forced by events in the USA and worldwide: depression, revolts, breakdowns of vital services. In any case a drastic lowering of living standards. Albert advises moving to a safe place and investing in supersafe ways.

A classic quote in the book: We have seen the development of a society in which "half the people work for a living, and the other half vote for it."

AMAZING STORIES

January, 1983 \$1.50

Obviously making a bid for a top-rated status with a clever/provocative cover by Kelly Freas, and stories by Poul Anderson, Tathith Lee, and Avram Davidson.

MAURAI & KITH By Poul Anderson
Tor, \$2.75

Five stories about the People of the Sea and the People of the Stars.

NEW AMERICA By Poul Anderson
Tor, \$2.50 Dec. 1982

Stories collected for the first time about the freedom-oriented colony planet, New America, and its struggle to stay free from a dictatorial Earth. Also included are "The Queen of Air and Darkness" and "Home."

THE GODS LAUGHED By Poul Anderson
Tor, \$2.95

New novel about contact with aliens.

NIGHT MARE By Piers Anthony
Ballantine, \$2.95 January, 1983
New Xanth novel. Fantasy.

COUNTING THE EONS By Isaac Asimov
Doubleday, \$13.95, Jan. 1983

Seventeen science essays from F&SF.

ISAAC ASIMOV PRESENTS THE GREAT SF STORIES: VOLUME EIGHT---1946

Edited by Isaac Asimov and Martin H. Greenberg. DAW, \$3.50

Sixteen stories, most from ASTOUNDING.

THE SUN SHINES BRIGHT

By Isaac Asimov
Avon/Discus, \$2.95

Seventeen of his science columns from F&SF, 1980-81.

STORM SEASON

Edited by Robert Lynn Asprin
Ace, \$2.95

Fantasy anthology centered around the planet Sanctuary. This is the fourth of a series. Stories in this volume are by Asprin, C.J. Cherryh, Diana L. Paxson, Lynn Abbey, Janet Morris, and Andrew J. Offutt.

DHAMPYRE By Scott Baker
Timescape/Pocket, \$2.95, Dec. 1982.
Occult fantasy novel.

BEST OF BEAUMONT By Charles Beaumont
Bantam, \$2.95

Twenty-two stories. Introduction by Ray Bradbury. Afterword by Christopher Beaumont. Charles Beaumont died in 1966.

BLOODED ON ARACHNE By Michael Bishop
Timescape/Pocket, \$3.50, Jan. 1983.

Thirteen science fiction short stories, all by Bishop.

AND ALL THE STARS A STAGE

By James Blish
Avon, \$2.25

Reprint of a 1971 Doubleday novel, which was a rewritten 1960 AMAZING novel. A race flees a dying sun system in a small fleet of survival ships.

TEST OF FIRE By Ben Bova
Tor, \$2.95

Part of this novel was published separately, in substantially different form, as WHEN THE SKY BURNED, in 1973.

COLONY By Ben Bova
Timescape/Pocket, \$3.95 Jan. 1983

Fifth printing of this near-future sf novel about a degenerate, dying Earth and its space colonies.

THE JUDAS MANDALA

By Damien Broderick
Timescape/Pocket Books, \$2.50.

MEGALODON By Robin Brown
Playboy, \$2.75, 1982.

A 200-foot-long ancestor of the shark, thought extinct, is not. Near-future sf novel.



BEDLAM PLANET By John Brunner.
Ballantine, \$2.25. Second edition.
First published in 1968.

THE DRAMATURGES OF YAN

By John Brunner
Del Rey, \$2.50

An ancient race on an alien planet, human colonists---conflict of a special kind. First published in 1972.

THE WEBS OF EVERYWHERE

By John Brunner
Ballantine, \$2.25 January, 1983

Reprinted (1974) sf novel about the consequences of matter-transmitters.

CINNABAR By Edward Bryant
Bantam, \$2.50

A mosaic of stories about the city at the center of time.

First published by Macmillan in 1976.

KESRICK By Lin Carter
DAW, \$2.25

'An adult fantasy.'

FANTASY ANNUAL V
Edited By Terry Carr
Timescape, \$2.95

Twelve stories, including the Hugo-winning novelet "The Quicken ing" by Michael Bishop. Also a section of Recommended Reading.

CARIFEX MARDI GRAS By John F. Carr
Pequod Press Hardcover \$12.
POB 122 Signed & numbered, \$20
Northridge, CA 91328

The 21st Century, high-tech, a period of virtually total personal freedom--used by some to explore weird, grotesque religions, life-styles, body-alterations, drugs.

Not truly a novel. Segments of lives---Roald Vallen, award-winning holotape producer/director whose artform is fading from favor, seeks to rejuvenate his career by an expose of the mysterious Jackson Hole Enclave. He finds warped rites of passage---a kind of deadly initiation---to true "citizenship" in the Enclave.

And in Part Two a youth captured from the gang-controlled Teener Town is purchased by a Jackson Hole resident and forced to become one of the family and then to endure The Crying Clown Rites, too.

In Park Three, "The Dance of the Dwarfs," Allen Heart, a vicious talkshow host with 82 million viewers, is kidnapped and surgically altered into a dwarf as revenge by the king of the dwarfs.

None of these major characters are likeable or worth caring about. They're all warped by their society.

The segments of this "novel" only barely track together, and the purpose is still obscured. This book is a prequel to John F. Carr and Camden Benare's eight volume work 'about the trials and trails of the Third Jesus.'

That Jesus is introduced in the final pages of the Allen Heart segment by matter-of-factly performing a miracle---raising a dead woman to life.

This fragmentary novel is a kind of sample of the civilization involved in this projected series, and a sampler of the people. It's intriguing, it could be impressive, and important. I hope further books of the series are published.

The many, many full-page Fabian illustrations are very fine. The production values of this hardback are very high.

CHARON: A DRAGON AT THE GATE
By Jack L. Chalker.
Ballantine, \$2.95. Book Three of The Four Lords of the Diamond series.

BLACK FIRE By Sonni Cooper
Timescape/Pocket, \$2.95, Jan. 1983.
A Star Trek original adventure.

2010: ODYSSEY TWO
By Arthur C. Clarke
DelRey/Ballantine, \$14.95
Sequel to 2001: A Space Odyssey.

A TAPESTRY OF MAGICS
By Brian Daley
Del Rey, \$2.95 February, 1983
New fantasy novel: 'An action-filled fantasy set in a world where any character from myth or reality may be found--from Robin Hood's merry men to Count Dracula.'

THE ELECTRONIC COTTAGE
By Joseph Deken
Bantam New Age, \$3.95
All about computers and how they are and will impact on the individual and the home. The visible possibilities are fabulous.

DHALGREN By Samuel R. Delany
Bantam, \$3.95
Redistribution of the 15th printing of this rite-of-passage/metaphysical/search-for-meaning novel about youth in a destroyed future.

THE DRAGON LORD By David Drake
Tor, \$2.95 Dec. 1982
Excellent sword and sorcery told with a gritty realism and which introduces two new major characters to rival Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. Meet Starkad and Mael, two exceptional mercenaries in the time of King Arthur who in the end are required to help kill a dragon

THE CABAL #3: THE EVANGELIST
By Philip Dunn
Berkley, \$2.25 December, 1982.

The Cabal is (apparently) a loose alliance of supercriminals of the future whose adventures in the galaxy are followed in this series.

These were (are?) first published in England. The two previous titles are THE CABAL and THE BLACK MOON.

This adventure features Pinball, 'Olympic wrestler and brilliant tactician with a taste for nuns. 8 known wives, 64 offspring. Wanted for usual crimes plus matrimonial offenses.'

The four other members of the cabal are as bizarre in talents and predilections.

The writing style is thin and littered with present-day colloquialisms; the plausibility quotient is near zero.

THE MECHANICAL GOD; MACHINES IN SCIENCE FICTION
Edited by Thomas P. Dunn and Richard D. Erlich
Greenwood Press, \$29.95
88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881
Quality hardcover, subtitled 'Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy, No. 1.'

QUEEN OF SORCERY By David Eddings.
Ballantine, \$2.95. Book Two of The Belgariad. PAWN OF PROPHECY was the first book. Forthcoming novels in the series are: MAGICIAN'S GAMBIT, CASTLE OF WIZARDRY and ENCHANTED END GAME.

SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES #28
Edited by Charles Elkins and Robert M. Philmus
SFS Publications, \$5.50
R.M. Philmus,
English Dept. CONCORDIA UNIV.,
7141 Sherbrooke St W.,
Montreal, Quebec,
CANADA H4B 1R6
Heavy academic raking over sf.

THE PRINCES OF THE AIR
By John M. Ford
Timescape, \$2.50
Space adventure in a galactic empire by the author of WEB OF ANGELS.

CHIMERA By Stephen Gallagher
St. Martin's Press \$13.95
'A terrifying novel of genetic engineering gone wrong.'

THE PIRATES OF ROSINANTE
By Alexis A. Gilliland
DelRey, \$2.50 Dec. 1982
This third Rosinante novel continues the space colony's trials and tribulations in its struggle with the space forces of Earth nations for freedom. Ruler of Rosinante, Cantrell, plays the odds and has exquisite help from sentient computers. Mix in a computer-originated space religion, satire of the third kind, and you have a curiously readable adventure series. There's hard science, too, which baffles me.

THE WARRIOR ENCHAINED
By Sharon Green
DAW, \$2.95 January, 1983
Quoting the backcover blurbs is probably enough. I've dipped into this 352 page novel enough to say the writing is a turnoff for me: I found the style clumsy and cute and a pain to read.
'Terry was Central's Prime in-

telligence agent. Her talent made her nearly priceless as an inter-planetary operative. Yet there came a time when that price had to be met. The barbarian Tammad demanded it and Terry's bosses were willing to meet it.

'So she was tricked into returning to a world that considered women the property of their men---and a highly civilized one such as Terry to be a prize possession.

'But Terry was a warrior at heart and though her role called for submission to dominance and even bondage, she was prepared to use all her feminine wiles and secret-agent cunning to show a primitive world just who would be its true master.'

'IF YOU LIKE JOHN NORMAN,
YOU WILL LIKE SHARON GREEN.'

This is written from Terry's point-of-view. Terry is a mind-reader of sorts.

The book is packaged blatantly to appeal to the John Norman GOR readership, especially the women readers, as it indulges their submission/bondage fantasies and yet provides a core of female superiority to the structure.

THE BROKEN CITADEL

By Joyce Ballou Gregorian
Ace, \$2.95 January, 1983

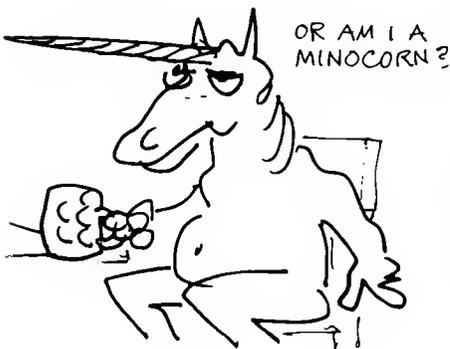
High fantasy novel with the usual medieval-like fantasy land with a queen of dark sorcery, a prince on a quest, an imprisoned princess, a dragon...and a girl protagonist from our world who enters via a "window."

THE ROAD TO SCIENCE FICTION #4 FROM HERE TO FOREVER

Edited and with an Introduction and Notes by James Gunn
Mentor \$4.95

Thirty-one stories, 531 pages. More cream off the top of decades of sf.

UNITAUR



HEARTLAND By David Hagberg
Tor, \$3.50 Jan. 1983

Near-future novel about the dependence of the world on U.S. grain and a plot by the Soviets to ruin the grain crop by means of a grain disease. 'As Famine threatens, there are no rules to war.'

And who controls the world's food supply controls the world.

MISPLACED PERSONS By Lee Harding
Bantam, \$2.25; Jan.1983. First published by Harper & Row, 1979

A teenage boy gradually fades from our world. His parents, girlfriend, waitresses...all ignore him and fail to see him, think about him. He enters a grey universe of ghostlike, non-useable, non-edible things... But there are a few items, a few places---and two people who also exist in this strange plane of existence: an old man and a girl. They scrounge for enough to eat and drink and try to make sense of their predicament.

Then the old man disappears. Then the girl. And finally the boy feels the darkness closing in on him.

The mystery is explained, sort-of, and the reader is left with a feeling of having been cheated.

This short novel touches deep fears in adolescents but is frustrating for adults.

Lee Harding is a long-time sf fan and writer who lives in Australia.

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT FOR
PRESIDENT By Harry Harrison
Bantam, \$2.75

A new "Slippery Jim" diGriz adventure in the 30th Century.

UNDERSEA By Paul Hazel
Boston: Atlantic--Little, Brown
\$14.95. Fantasy hardcover novel;
second book of a trilogy. First
book was YEARWOOD.

THE HUMBOLDT EFFECT By Delia Huddy
Greenwillow Books, \$9.50.
Science fiction Juvenile novel.

SOFTLY WALKS THE BEAST
By Thomas O.D. Hunter
Avon, \$2.75

An after-the-bomb survival novel. Looks good."

THE LOGIC OF FANTASY: H.G. WELLS
AND SCIENCE FICTION
By John Huntington
Columbia University Press \$22.50
562 West 113th Street,
New York, NY 10025

Heavy academic analysis dissects Wells' thinking, conscious and un-

conscious through his "science fiction" writings. 'Fantasy' here is used in its broad meaning, not as genre as we know it. This is a very cognitive book.

PULLING THROUGH By Dean Ing
Ace, \$2.95 January, 1983

A very hard near-future atomic war novel loaded with how-to-survive-in-the-resulting-radioactivity-and-social-chaos information.

And, to make the book must-have, in the final section are fact articles showing/telling of jury-rigged survival equipment that can be made, and used.

A rough book to read because of the brutal reality of its basic, all-too-believable premise.

A WOMAN OF THE FUTURE

By David Ireland
Bantam Windstone, \$3.95

A novel set in a future Australia, about a young woman who somehow changes into a leopard.

This has the taint of literary speculative/symbolic/social fiction, and then some.

CONAN THE DEFENDER

By Robert Jordan
Tor, \$5.95

A new Conan adventure. Trade paperback edition--but with pulp paper.

Robert Jordan is an excellent colorful action writer who easily takes Conan through a typical Conan adventure defending a king, opposing an evil sorcerer, contending with various beautiful women and intriguing groups in the city of Nemedra.

Tor will be publishing another Jordan CONAN novel in April: CONAN THE UNCONQUERED.

Again: Jordan is very good at this---sensual, detailed, action/suspense oriented. Robert E. Howard would approve.

H.P. LOVECRAFT By S.T. Joshi
Starmond Reader's Guide #13, \$5.95

WINTERMIND

By Marvin Kaye and Parke Godwin
Doubleday, \$15.95

This novel continues the epic future begun in THE MASTERS OF SOLITUDE.

HOME TO AVALON By Arthur H. Landis
DAW, \$2.50

A WORLD CALLED CAMELOT

By Arthur H. Landis
Daw, \$2.35

Revised, rewritten version of the 1969 novel, LET THERE BE MAGIC by "James R. Keaveny".

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

By Glen A. Larson and Robert Thurston.

Berkley, \$2.50 Dec. 1982.

First published in 1978, this is this novel's sixth printing. There are six sequels in this series.

RETIFF AND THE WARLORDS

By Keith Laumer

Timescape/Pocket, \$2.50; Fourth Pocket printing. First published in 1968.

Pulp-style interstellar diplomacy/adventure.

KNIGHT OF DELUSIONS By Keith Laumer
Tor, \$2.75

The short title novel is joined by a novelette,

The short title novel, first published in 1973, is joined by a novelette, "Thunderhead" (1963), and a long short story, "The Last Command" (1971).

RETIFF: DIPLOMAT AT ARMS

By Keith Laumer

Timescape/Pocket Books, \$2.75.

Stories collected from the 60s.

RED AS BLOOD By Tanith Lee

DAW, \$2.50 January, 1983

Subtitled "Tales from the Sisters Grimmer," this is a 9-story fantasy collection.

THE EYE OF THE HERON

By Ursula K. Le Guin

Harper & Row, \$11.95 January, 1983

This short sf novel originally appeared in the anthology MILLENNIAL

WOMEN, EDITED BY Virginia Kidd and published by Delacorte Press, 1978.

The themes are similar to those in her THE DISPOSSESSED: the evils of capitalism exaggerated, the rebellion of the oppressed who are better off separating themselves from the contamination of Greed and its evil consequences. In this story there are strong-willed women playing key roles in the desperate minority's struggle to escape into the uncharted wilderness of an unexplored planet.

CHANNEL'S DESTINY

By Jean Lorrach and Jacqueline Lichtenberg

Doubleday, \$11.95

A new Sime/Gen novel.

DRAGON LORD OF THE SAVAGE EMPIRE

By Jean Lorrach

Playboy, \$2.75, Dec. 1982.

Fantasy novel.

THE IMPULSE OF FANTASY LITERATURE

By C.N. Manlove

Kent State University Press \$17.50
Kent, OH 44242

Looking deep, Manlove sees fantasy as a reaction against technology and the subsequent enforced distancing between man and nature. Fantasy celebrates individuality and being, feeling, a special kind of wonder.

Tech future shock has apparently produced a growing nostalgia/yearning for a natural, impossible medievalism with wish and daring.

This is a quality hardback and publication date is January 20, 1983. I wryly note that the book was printed in Hong Kong. And this book has an English edition by Macmillan Press, Ltd.

THE JEDI MASTER'S QUIZ BOOK

Compiled by Rusty Miller.

Ballantine, \$1.95. Trivia Q's & A's.

OMEN IV: ARMAGEDDON 2000

By Gordon McGill

Signet, \$3.50, Oct. 1982.

Latest in this occult series. Interesting that this novel is copyrighted by 20th Century Fox.

THE BLUE SWORD By Robin McKinley

Greenwillow Books, \$11.50.

Fantasy Juvenile novel.

[Greenwillow Books, 105 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016]

THE ODDS ARE MURDER By Mike McQuay

A Mathew Swain adventure

Bantam, \$2.50

The fourth Mathew Swain sf future private eye novel.

THE FIRES OF PARATIME

By L.E. Modesitt, Jr.

Timescape, \$2.95

Science-fantasy novel.

THE WAR HOUND AND THE WORLD'S PAIN

By Michael Moorcock

Timescape, \$2.50

An intriguing, tough fantasy involving an unusual deal with the Devil. Multileveled.

JIREL OF JOIRY By C.L. Moore

Ace \$2.75

Fantasy stories from the Thirties, packaged as a Feminist Fantasy novel:

'The heavy boots of invaders

rang in the hallways, and the arching ceilings echoed back the clash of falling swords. Joiry's commander was brought, still struggling violently, before the conqueror. Standing tall, armor running red with blood, Jirel of Joiry refused to surrender her home, and vowed to her enemy that his victory would cost him his life, and more.

'That very night Joiry's Lady crept by secret ways to the castle's deepest dungeon. Laying her strong hands upon a forbidden door, she bade farewell to the world of treacherous men---then walked of her own will through the doorway and into Hell, in search of her revenge.'

EARTH DREAMS by Janet Morris

Berkley, \$2.75 Dec. 1982.

The final volume of the Kerrion Empire saga. DREAM DANCER and EARTH DREAMS are the other volumes.

First published in hardback in Sept. 1982 by Berkley-Putnam.

THE WINE OF VIOLENCE By James Morrow

Ace, \$2.75

'A science fiction fable.' Written in a breezy, pulpish, almost juvenile style.

THE UNHOLY By Alex Nebrensky

Signet, \$2.95

Supernatural horror novel.

THE MAGIC MAY RETURN

Edited by Larry Niven

Ace, \$2.95 January, 1983

A fantasy anthology by Poul Anderson, Steve Barnes, Mildred Downey Broxon and Dean Ing, who created their stories to fit into the fantasy/magic world created by Larry Niven in his reprinted novelette "Not Long Before the End."

A trade paperback edition was published in 1981.

BLOOD BROTHERS OF GOR

By John Norman

DAW, \$3.50

A lot more of the same. This is the 18th book of the Tarl Cabot saga. Pure macho fantasy.

ALL IN GOOD TIME

By Edward Ormondroyd

Bantam, \$1.95 February, 1983.

Time travel science fantasy, intended for Young Adults; a sequel to TIME AT THE TOP.

DAVY By Edgar Pangborn.

Ballantine, \$2.75.

Second printing. First published in 1964.

LADY OF LIGHT By Diana L. Paxson
Timescape/Pocket, \$2.75, Dec. 1982.

The First Book of Westria, a
fantasy series.

TITUS GROAN \$18.95
GORMENGHAST \$18.95
TITUS ALONE \$18.95

By Mervyn Peake
The Overlook Press
c/o Viking Press
625 Madison Av.
New York, NY 10022

The Gormenghast trilogy in
quality hardback. This definitive
text, representing the author's
final intentions, is available in
no other edition in the USA.

Introduction by Anthony Burgess.
Many black & white illustra-
tions in each volume by Peake.
A remarkable saga.

PHILIP K. DICK By Hazel Pierce
Starmont Reader's Guide #12, \$4.95

THE DEADLY SKY By Doris Piserchia
DAW, \$2.50 January, 1983
Science fiction novel.

YESTERDAY'S TOMORROWS

Edited by Frederik Pohl
Berkley, \$9.95. Large trade paper-
back. Thirty-four stories and ex-
cerpts selected from the eras and
formats of sf through the decades.

A word about the above trade
paperback: the paper used is a good
quality pulp. It is the same paper,
I think, used in regular size
paperback books. The Pohl book is
over 400 pages of small type, so may
be worth the price. It's doubtful
the book will last long or survive
many readings.

UNDERSEA QUEST

By Frederik Pohl & Jack Williamson
Del Rey, \$1.95
A 1954 juvenile about undersea
living and intrigue.

UNDERSEA FLEET

By Frederik Pohl & Jack Williamson
Ballantine, \$1.95
This 1956 sf juvenile (in its
second Ballantine edition) continues
the adventures of Cadet James Eden
of the Sub-Sea Academy.

WALL AROUND A STAR

By Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson
DEL REY, \$2.95
Sequel to FARTHEST STAR.
Available 2/83

CLAN AND CROWN By Jerry Pournelle
Ace \$5.95 & Roland Green
The second JANISSARIES sf novel.
Illustrated by Josep M. Martin
Sauri. Trade paperback. This is a
collaboration between Pournelle and

Roland Green, and is copyrighted in
both names, though Green's name
does not appear on the cover [yet
does on the title page---a screw-up
by the publisher?].

DELIA OF VALLIA By Dray Prescot
DAW, \$2.35

This is the 28th "Dray Prescot"
novel of his adventures on the
planet Kregen. This series used to
be written by "Alan Burt Akers."
Behind all these pseudonyms is Ken
Bulmer.

OPERATION LONGLIFE

By E. Hoffman Price
Ballantine, \$2.75 January, 1983
New sf novel about Avery Jarvis
"Doc" Brandon, a 186-year-old gene
engineer who looks 35. A lot of
people desperately want his secret.
Set in the 21st Century.

OPERATION MISFIT

By E. Hoffman Price
Ballantine, \$2.75 January, 1983
Reprinted sf novel (1980) about
a social misfit, exiled into space,
who discovers an alien race and in-
credible mineral wealth. This pre-
sents Earth's 21st Century Thought
Control Board even more problems.

SIDESHOW By Mike Resnick
Signet, \$2.50, Oct. 1982.

Tales of the Galactic Midway,
#1. Aliens show up in a freak show,
in a carnival.

KING OF THE WOOD

By John Maddox Roberts
Doubleday, \$11.95, Jan. 1983
In 1450 A.D.--sword and sorcery.

THE 57TH FRANZ KAFKA

By Rudy Rucker
Ace, \$2.50 January, 1983
The latest Rucker Wonder; a sto-
ry collection involving weird, ex-
istential, surrealistic mathematical
bends of his mind. Then there is
"Hyperspherical Space and Beyond"
which will warp your mind!

THE KILL By Alan Ryan
Tor, \$2.95

New horror novel.

A ROSE FOR ARMAGEDDON
By Hilbert Schenck
Timescape/Pocket Books, \$2.50.

ANALOG'S LIGHTER SIDE

Edited by Stanley Schmidt
Dial Press, \$12.95 January, 1983.

Thirteen-story anthology. Intro-
duction by Schmidt. Numerous illus-
trations by Kelly Freas, and by Ed
Cartier, John Sanchez, Jack Gaughan,
Vincent Di Fate.

Humorous science fiction.

NIFFT THE LEAN By Michael Shea
Daw, \$2.95

A novel, subtitled "Raiders
of the infernal domains," with a
marvelous Michael Whelan cover
painting.

ALPHA CENTAURI By Robert Siegel
Berkley \$3.95 Trade paperback.
Fantasy

THE BOOK OF SKULLS

By Robert Silverberg
Bantam, \$2.95
A fascinating, well-character-
ized metaphysical/sf search for
possible immortality. Tensioned!
First published by Scribner's
in 1972.

OUT OF THEIR MINDS By Clifford Simak
DAW, \$2.50 January, 1983
Fantasy novel.

SPECIAL DELIVERANCE

By Clifford D. Simak
Del Rey, \$2.75
Time travel enigma novel.
First paperback edition.

SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET

By Clifford D. Simak
Del Rey, \$2.75
Lone survivor of a 1000-year
space journey...and intriguing
Simakian complications on a new
planet. First published in 1976.

THE VOID CAPTAIN'S TALE

By Norman Spinrad
Timescape Books, \$13.95, Jan. 1983.
His new sf novel. Dynamite
premises.

EARTH IS HEAVEN By E.C. Tubb
DAW \$2.25

This is the 27th novel in the
Dumerest of Terra series. In this
book Earl Dumerest is about to blast
off in a starship in a very promis-
ing voyage to find at long last the
legendary planet Earth, mythical
birthplace of humanity. But first
there is this problem with the de-
monic Cyclan and a conspiracy....

A VATICAN AFFAIR By Maria Valde-
mi Tor, \$2.95

A Nazi, now a Cardinal, may be-
come the new pope.

THE NETWORK REVOLUTION---CONFESSIONS OF A COMPUTER SCIENTIST

By Jacques Vallee
And/Or Press, \$7.95

Trade paperback, quality paper. A perspective from inside the revolution and of its far-reaching impacts on humanity.

TO LIVE FOREVER By Jack Vance
DAW \$2.50

Sf novel, originally published in 1956.

THE CURSE OF THE WITCH QUEEN

By Paula Volsky
Del Rey, \$2.95

High fantasy. First publication.

THE BOOK OF THE DUN COW

By Walter Wangerin, Jr.
Pocket Books, \$2.50.

Fantasy novel, first published in 1978; second PB printing.

THE SWORD OF BHELEU

By Lawrence Watt-Evans
Del Rey/Ballantine, \$2.50

Advance copy of this third fantasy of the adventures of Garth the overman. To be published 1/83. Garth is the possessor of (and is possessed by) the fearful sword of Bheleu, the god of destruction.

The first paragraph shows Watt-Evans to be a skilled writer, and an effective one; I hope to find time to read this.

THE HANGING STONES

By Manly Wade Wellman
Doubleday, \$11.95, 1982.

This is the fourth Silver John novel. The others: *THE OLD GODS WAKEN*, *AFTER DARK*, and *THE LOST AND THE LURKING*.

BREAK OF DARK by Robert Westall
Greenwillow Books \$9.50

105 Madison Av
New York, NY 10016

A five-story collection about strange and unnatural occurrences. For ages 12 and up. Westall is an award-winning author.

CITY OF CAIN By Kate Wilhelm
Timescape/Pocket Books, \$2.75.

Novel, first published in 1974.

THE QUEEN OF THE LEGION

By Jack Williamson
Timescape/Pocket, \$2.95 Jan. 1983.

Space adventure novel. The latest in the Legion of Space series.

RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE SITTING NOW

By Robert Anton Wilson
And/Or Press, \$7.95

Trade paperback, quality book paper. Further tales, essays, ideas, speculations, essays, commentaries on the Illuminati and other things of interest.

ELSEWHERE---TALES OF FANTASY, VOL II

Edited by Terri Windling
& Mark Alan Arnold
Ace, \$2.95 November, 1982

New anthology featuring twelve new fantasy stories, seven reprinted stories, and thirteen poems. Also, many very good pencil drawings by Terri Windling. New fiction by such as Jane Yolen, Joanna Russ, Evangeline Walton, Patricia A. McKillip, and Fritz Leiber.

STEPHEN KING By Douglas E. Winter
Starmont Reader's Guide #16, \$5.95

Series editor for the Guides is Roger C. Schlobin. Each contain analysis, bibliographies, an index.

SCIENCE FICTION DIALOGUES

Edited by Gary Wolfe
Academy Chicago, \$8.95
425 N. Michigan Av.
Chicago, IL 60611

Essays by Aldiss, Gunn, Budrys and others. An overview of sf, with rather interesting examinations of various aspects. Many pages of resource materials. A lot of valuable material here for even a casual fan/reader.

The format is trade paperback, with good book paper.

THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR

By Gene Wolfe
Timescape/Pocket, \$2.95; First paperback edition: Dec. 1982. First published in 1981.

This is Volume Three of The Book of the New Sun. Superior science fiction.

Volume One: *THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER*.

Volume Two: *THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR*.

THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH

By Gene Wolfe
Timescape [hardcover], \$15.95

This is the fourth and the 'climactic' superb volume of the saga of Severian the Torturer in *THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN*.

Previous volumes were:
THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER
THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR
THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR.

THE PLAYGROUND By T.M. Wright
Tor, \$2.95

Occult horror novel.

SORCERER'S LEGACY By Janny Wurts
Ace, \$2.50

A fantasy novel about a woman trapped in a strange land of wizards and power struggles.

TEMPTING FATE By Chelsea Quinn Yarbro
Signet, \$3.95

Yarbro's hero vampire, Count Saint-Germain, battles the Nazis. A long novel---662 pages.

EYE OF CAT By Roger Zelazny
Timescape hardcover, \$13.95.

DILVISH, THE DAMNED By Roger Zelazny.
Ballantine, \$2.50.

Dilvish is recently delivered from the spell of Jelerek, the evil sorcerer who bound him for hundreds of years in Hell. He has vowed to kill Jelerek and is on the trail of the ageless, eternal sorcerer all through this book.

There is one minor confrontation at the tower of ice.

Dilvish's companion/steed is a kind of intelligent, magical steel horse of great power.

The writing of these stories, progressing from 1964 through 1981 or 82, changes from a bare-bones, high-fantasy narrative to that of jocular, almost satiric dialogue-style in the final, latest story, "Dilvish, the Damned," as if Zelazny himself couldn't take the saga seriously any longer.

COILS

By Roger Zelazny and Fred Saberhagen
Tor, \$2.95

New collaborative novel about giant computers and giant corporations. Many sketchy full-page illos by Ron Miller.

The story deals in standard ways with a memory-wiped psi-talented man who gradually discovers who and what he is and who finally brings down the super-corporation and its leader who used and abused him and others. Some good, imaginative bits and characters, intriguing action.

THE TWILIGHT ZONE COMPANION

By Mark Scott Zicree
Bantam, \$9.95

Trade paperback, good book paper. A chronicle of *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* TV show, with over 200 photos, a synopsis of each of the 150+ episodes, Rod Sirling's opening and closing narrations, and complete cast listings. In short, everything you'd want to know about *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* and its creator.

STANDING BY JERICHO

BY STEVE GALLAGHER

For a while now, I've been trying to come to terms with something I can not easily understand. As I've gradually been sliding into fandom over the last couple of years, I've also been falling out of love with SF. The growing involvement and the growing disillusionment have been proceeding at roughly the same rate and I was beginning to wonder if the two might be related.

But now I'm pretty sure they're not. As a way of attempting to explain why, I'd like to talk about a minor SF work that made a brief appearance on the bookstands and then faded away without leaving much of a trace. It was called *THE LONG WALK*, by one Richard Bachman; I think I saw a single medium-temperature review of the book in a British fanzine.

Rumor reached me a couple of weeks before it appeared that *THE LONG WALK* was, in fact, a pseudonymous effort from Stephen King, and so I went looking. King is one of those writers whose works I tend to devour, and I'd probably go out and buy his *COLLECTED NOTES TO THE MAILMAN*. He's what I'd call an invisible stylist; subtle without being obviously clever, stylish without being showy, providing dazzle without obvious razzle ... I hate him. When you're a new arrival just starting to make a living at this game (I call it the struggling phase of my autobiography), the last thing you need is somebody making it look so easy.

Not everybody agrees with me about King; the commonest criticism I've heard is that his books are out of balance, his attention to character exceeding his attention to plot. All I can say is, I've never found it to be so. (In fact, my enthusiasm for King as a writer has been so uncritical that I was starting to wor-

ry that I might have become a faddist instead of a plain old fan. Faith was restored by my discovery of the *Gunslinger* series in *F&SF*; a thundering dud. I fell on it with relief.)

Besides, I wouldn't like to see character downgraded against plot; SF's reviewers would seem to agree, but amongst the paying public perhaps the feeling has never really become widespread. The (in my view) damaging notion of "the idea as hero" still has a lot to answer for. But now I'm getting ahead of myself.

THE LONG WALK was sneaked out by NEL in large numbers but with no promotion. It had an indifferent cover with one of those "in the great tradition of ..." copy lines that serve more as a warning-off than as encouragement; in this case, the "great tradition" was that of *ROLLERBALL*. The similarities are so superficial that they're barely worth talking about; near-future society, public catharsis achieved through a nationally-hyped contest involving genuine suffering and death. However, whilst the *ROLLERBALL* movie turned out to be little more than Conan on rollerskates, *THE LONG WALK* avoided showy action and heroics; here the story is of a group of ordinary teenagers, all volunteers, walking until they drop. Those who drop and don't get up are shot where they lie; at the end, the single survivor is declared the winner and allowed to name his own reward.

And that's really all the plot there is. Internal evidence for the book being one of King's is high and for me, convincing. There are opening quotations in which Thomas Carlyle and Bob Dylan are happily juxtaposed, and a Maine-New Hampshire setting. The no-frills, sharply evocative style is immediately recogniz-

able, and there are at least two images that reappear, word-for-word, elsewhere in King books. Wouldn't you know it, a fast-flick through my copy hasn't turned up either of them, but the one which sticks in my memory is that of eyes "hard and shiny like doorknobs" which also appears in *THE MIST*, King's long novelette in the *DARK FORCES* collection.

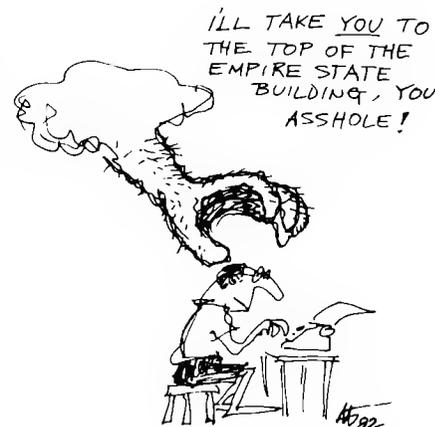
THE LONG WALK is by no means a poor work, so I think we have to look elsewhere for an explanation of the pseudonym. Maybe it covers a collaboration, but I don't believe this. More likely, is the idea that it's a response to genre pressures.

You couldn't really get away with calling it anything other than SF. Sometimes you can just about manage it with a near-future story that doesn't feature outlandish hardware, but in this case the nature of the contest itself can't be disguised as anything other than a feature of a projected tomorrow. Which makes it SF, which places it firmly in the good old ghetto.

Pause for a digression. I don't want to rehash all the arguments about the so-called SF ghetto, partly because I don't know all of them and partly because the ones that I do know can get a bit dull. Instead, let me try to draw an inference from another field altogether.

A few years ago, when I had a steady job and a better-than-average income, I used to collect movies on eight millimeter film. Video was around but hadn't taken off; there were more incompatible systems than you could count and the whole idea seemed doomed anyway.

The paucity of titles available was easily compensated for by the avidity of collectors. Print quality varied from lousy to really lousy, with the honorable exception of Disney material. The Trufans -- sorry, the most ardent collectors -- gathered for conventions where there were



screenings, panel discussions and dealers' stalls. There were amateur press magazines on offer, filled with film reviews and capable of making you rethink your ideas of punctuation. The future was looking good; more titles, bigger titles, improved print and sound quality.

But then video finally managed to crawl out of its egg and 8mm started to die on its feet. The big studios and the distributors -- the "publishers" of the film titles -- saw a growing mass-market of casual users with considerably more spending power than the small hard core of film buffs, and they swung their marketing guns around accordingly.

It made good business sense. Unfortunately, the hard core will never believe it; they continue to talk about the amazing opportunities that the companies are missing by overlooking them. During a panel discussion at the last filmcon that I attended, someone stood up and, gesturing around the hall, said that it was surely a measure of the relative importance of the video market that they could never get together a gathering as impressive as this. There were about three hundred people in the place.

Well, I can't help it; the analogy's far too detailed to be ignored. The mutually exclusive technologies of film and video have a direct parallel in the distinct and rarely-overlapping genres maintained by the publishing industry. SF is a small part of that market, although the avidity of its supporters and participants doesn't really allow them to appreciate this.

It's difficult to say who does more to keep the situation this way, the publishers or the public. The publishers design and run the system, but only in response to what the readers appear to want. Every book bought is a kind of vote and, as in any democracy, once the votes have been counted, then the minorities have to put up with whatever system they get.

That's how the "ghetto" comes to be; and as long as it exists, SF will be limited. The iconography of the genre was fixed a long time ago, and the fiction-as-product system described by Piers Anthony Jacob in *SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW* #43 determines that it will be used and re-used rather than developed. So is the answer, as some advocate, the removal of divisions between SF and the mainstream?

The justification given for this is that SF would benefit from many of the mainstream's stylistic and thematic advantages whilst the mainstream would get new energy from SF's ideas-content. In an ideal world

this would be the case, and the kind of fiction we'd get as a result would be marvelous to behold. Unfortunately, what we'd more probably get is SF's complete disappearance. It lives as a genre because there's a self-defining and repeat-buying market for it; remove that by some kind of campaign of de-classifying titles and de-specifying covers, and the publishing industry will no longer have a target group to serve/exploit (choose either term depending on your prejudices).

So when King, a writer whose mainstream appeal has taken him to the top of the world's bestseller lists (don't blame me if this isn't accurate, blame Dick Cavett), comes up with a piece of undisguisable SF, you can almost hear the editorial shudders. An SF tag on a mainstream writer is just bad news. To get autobiographical for a moment, last year I sold a novel to a publisher which was mainstream-classifiable, and then I offered to the same house a pure SF work. This was bought as well, but on the contractual condition that I'd use a pseudonym for it; the fear was that the SF book would actually drag down sales of the first book.

THE LONG WALK isn't the best SF I've ever read, but it's better than most. What really elevates it for me is the craft-quality that is brought to bear on a simple subject, a few dozen kids shuffling down a road and gradually reducing in numbers. Although this, in essence, is all that happens, there isn't a slack passage in any of the 250 pages. Imagine the toughness of it as a writing exercise; you're not even allowed to vary the ages of your characters to provide differentiation. That the characters stand clearly and separately in the reader's mind without needing any of the old pulp "tags" is a clear indication that what we have here is no simple hackery, but the real stuff, clearly pre-visualized and sincerely executed.

In the British market at least, the book seems to have vanished without a trace. Which is a shame; maybe it wouldn't be a guaranteed award-winner, but it does showcase the kind of good writing that has drawn *TIME-SCAPE* so much praise. Both are "people stories" which draw their strength and plausibility from their SF context. An unfortunate and long-lasting consequence of the rule of idea as hero has been that the people are often cut to shape at the last minute to fill the holes that the story allows for them.

If I thought that either of these works was a signpost for the future, I'd be heartened; unfortunately, I don't believe it's the case. The SF that we'll largely continue to get

will be that which the industry presses writers to produce. If you want to succeed within the genre, you have to play it the genre's way; and if you want to avoid those restrictions and take your chance in the mainstream, then you have to leave your SF credentials at the gate on your way out. Or you can take a trip in from the outside, but you'd better make sure it's under an assumed name. As far as the future of SF is concerned, it's a no-win situation.

But meanwhile, there's fandom, that refuge for the disillusioned. Pass the bottle, and I'll tell you about the days when I thought Alfred Bester was God ...



TEN YEARS AGO IN SCIENCE FICTION — WINTER, 1973

BY ROBERT SABELLA

For the past year Frederik Werthan has been researching fanzines. Werthan is the author of *SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT*, a scathing attack of comic books in the Fifties that led to the creation of the Comics Code Authority. Now he has announced the forthcoming publication of *THE WORLD OF FANZINES*, while fandom waited with baited breaths for his conclusions ... Illinois Institute of Technology announced the annual John W. Campbell Memorial Award to be given for the best original novel of the year. Winners will be selected by a panel of judges and will receive a monetary grant as well as the award itself ... Random House purchased Ballantine Books but announced that Ian and Betty Ballantine would stay with the company as director and editor of Ballantine Books respectively ... Two authors whose reputations would grow considerably in the Seventies made their first big splashes in science fiction: George R.R. Martin with "The Second Kind of Loneliness" in *ANALOG* and Michael Bishop with "Death and Designation Among the Asadi" in *IF*.

THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

IN SEARCH OF A "REGULAR" FANTASY NOVEL: AN EXPERIMENT IN READING

I'd like to start off on a cheerful note this time by telling you about two fantasy novels I read recently and enjoyed hugely. They will become relevant later on.

The two books are not recent: THE GOLDEN ASS by Lucius Apuleius was written in Latin during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (c. 170 A.D.). The author was an African, from the area which is now Libya. His native language was Punic, and he was Greek by education. He learned Latin on his own as an adult, with considerable difficulty, according to his own account. As a result, the most bizarre and archaic Latin words and phrases were no more foreign to him than the most commonplace, and he evolved an incredible prose style. He was the Clark Ashton Smith of the ancient world. Ironically, the most famous English translation, that of William Aldington (mid-16th Century), makes no attempt to reproduce the original style. It was apparently regarded as the Tudor equivalent of "See Spot run" prose. To make things more interesting, Aldington didn't know Latin very well and committed about one howler per page, in addition to cribbing more from French and Spanish versions. However, he was a brilliant writer, and his version remains miraculously readable after 400 years when the more ornate stuff contemporary with him definitely is not. It is one of the early triumphs of English prose, and the intervening years have made it quite exotic enough for a 20th Century reader. Perhaps now it approximates the original more than Aldington ever imagined.

The book itself is a riotous explosion of sheer story-telling, filled with hairbreadth adventures, lurid tragedies, witchcraft, shape-changing, lust, a touch of perversion and sincere religiosity. With a miraculous appearance of the Goddess Isis to straighten everything out at the end. It is clearly a fantasy novel by the standards of its era in the same sense that THE EXORCIST is in ours. We have people today who believe in devils, but still such posses-

sions are enough out of the ordinary to seem fantastic. In the second century people believed in witchcraft (and at one point Apuleius got himself acquitted on such charges), but they did not, in the regular course of things, see people turned into donkeys, inflated pigskins come to life and impersonate humans, eldritch spectres hang their victims from rafters, etc., etc. Routine "supernaturalism" of the day included omens, portents and astrology, but this novel has a lot more. It was intended as romance, as a fantastic tale. It is the best fantasy novel to survive from antiquity, and the only one in Latin. (The others are all Greek. The Latin SATYRICON is a fragment, and is a Roman "mainstream" novel, for all somebody tells a werewolf story over the dinnertable at one point.)

You really ought to go out and read it. Skip any three contemporary fantasy novels in the process. THE GOLDEN ASS not only handles its fantastic elements well but, in a way that many modern fantasies fail to do, it touches ground in reality. For all the dialogue is stilted by our standards, the people are real. There's a lot of earthiness. We are left with a vivid picture of the Roman-ruled Greece in the Second Century the author knew. (My copy was published by Boni & Liverwright in 1927.)

The second book is SHE by H. Rider Haggard (1886). You've heard of this one. It's been filmed many times. The 1896 Swedish version, PILLAR OF FIRE, was perhaps the first fantasy film. A

more recent one, with Ursula Lundress, is the archetypal B-movie. The book itself has seen countless reprintings, from mass market paperbacks to Modern Library. Mine is Longman's, 1900.

SHE is the Lost Race novel, incorporating all the elements which later became standard. It is also as Lovecraft remarked, surprisingly good, an authentic break-neck novel of thrilling adventure, the likes of which the world rarely sees anymore. The opening chapters are incredibly powerful and promising, and for the most part the promise is fulfilled, for all it is somewhat static at times (how exactly a breakneck novel of thrilling adventure can be static at times I have not the space to explain, but when your heart stops thumping, you do notice that the heroes tend to stand around chatting in the Caves of Kor a lot), and Haggard tends to run on in poetic rhapsodies when he's not very good at it.

Go read SHE right away, and also skip any three contemporary fantasy novels. In a minute I'll get to which three you can skip. But now let us regard SHE in perspective as a generic novel which created and then outlived its genre.

Fantasy by itself is not a genre. It is a broad spectrum of literature, occurring in every culture in just about every era. Only cultures with dead souls like Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia don't have fantasy of some sort, and usually great fantasy. But every few centuries, fantasy grows a new branch (if you'll allow me



to mix metaphors), and these branches are genres. "Mainstream" literature might be regarded as a mirror-image of fantasy, the startling innovation of a story which is not fantasy.

THE GOLDEN ASS was probably a generic novel, but not enough has survived for anyone to tell. (For more information see "The Culture of the Novel" in Michael Grant's THE CLIMAX OF ROME.) Medieval romances were genre pieces. Typically, only a few of them are read anymore, except by scholars. In the middle of the 18th Century there arose a genre of Oriental tales, mostly imitations of the ARABIAN NIGHTS. But who among you has heard of the works of, say, Thomas Simon Gueulette or The Comte de Caylus? The closest thing to a survivor of this school is William Beckford's VATHEK, which is usually classed as a Gothic novel. The Gothic was a very clearly, very closely defined genre, of which thousands of specimens were published. Perhaps an informed reader can name four or five today: THE MONK by Lewis, THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO by Mrs. Radcliffe, THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO by Walpole, THE ROMANCE OF THE FOREST, also by Mrs. Radcliffe, and ... um ... well, maybe FRANKENSTEIN, which Brian Aldiss as persuasively argued to be the first science fiction novel. Science fiction as a genre seems to contain a lot more variety and good writing than the Gothic genre did, and I think that in 200 years more than four or five specimens will be remembered, but you can never be sure.

At the same time science fiction was getting started, the Lost Race novel was in full swing. Like other genres, it has its antecedents going way back. There are elements of the traveler's tale, the utopian romance, etc. If GULLIVER'S TRAVELS had been more of a straight adventure and written a century later than it was, it would be classified as a Lost Race novel. But SHE set the pattern: the ves-

tige of some ancient civilization in an inaccessible corner of the world, the immortal, supernatural seductress, the white adventurer who is almost lured into abandoning Western civilization forever, fabulous ruins, strange races and customs, etc., etc. Lost Race novels, good, bad and indifferent followed after Haggard by the hundreds, most of them incorporating the major elements. The last really noteworthy one was LOST HORIZON (1933). The genre persisted in the pulps, particularly in WEIRD TALES and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, and there have been a few scattered books in recent years, but it is effectively dead.

Each genre evolves in the same way. It is typical of its age. The Gothic was a rejection of the cold neo-classicism that had gone before it, and was perhaps a Romantic attempt to ignore the early Industrial Revolution. (Something people forget, since they don't actually read these Gothics any more, is that most of them were set in a romanticized Middle Ages rather the way much modern fantasy is, rather than in the authors' present.) Science fiction is a reaction to the latter part of the Industrial Revolution. It remains vital today because it is also a reflection of current technological change, threat and promise.

The Lost Race novel evolved during the era of exploration and empire-building in the 19th Century. People really were, like Haggard's heroes, penetrating jungles, climbing vast mountain ranges, discovering peoples previously unknown, etc. The ruins of Zimbabwe and Angkor Wat were authentic, exotic lost cities. As the last places of mystery were being opened up, what literature could be more exciting to the public than the Lost Race novel? Of course that era has passed and so has the heyday of the Lost Race novel.

But consider what happened in each case:

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO, the first Gothic, included a haunted castle, an imperiled heroine, a leering villain, a romantic hero who is the rightful heir to the estate, supernatural manifestations, etc. So do all the others.

Lost Race novels followed Haggard closely.

There are several paradigmatic works of science fiction. The fact that science fiction didn't fall into such a hard-and-fast formula needs to be studied. I don't have room for it here.

I might also mention that the detective novel went pretty much the same way. Every time, a genre begins to develop, than wham! along comes some overwhelmingly influential work and the form is locked in place. It follows the model until the genre dies. (Maybe science fiction has lasted so long because it has actually managed to break away from its original models. That's probably part of it.)

SHE is such a work. THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO is such a work.

So is THE LORD OF THE RINGS. Presto. Generic fantasy.

There is a problem in terminology here. I've just said that fantasy is not a genre, but something more universal. Then again, we clearly have something being published today which constitutes a genre as distinct and as rigid as the Gothic or the Lost Race novel. Some future literary historian will provide us with a handy label. In the meantime, I will just call such works genre fantasy. (GF for short.)

A genre may be said to exist whenever the type of novel is more important than who wrote it. THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO is a generic novel first and foremost. Then we might consider whether it is a good specimen of the type. Oh, yeah, it's written by Mrs. Radcliffe.

In the present day book industry, this means category publishing. We clearly have books which are fantasy novels first, and novels by so-and-so a very weak second. They have certain clearly definable characteristics. They are, I think, as characteristic a product of late 20th Century America as the Lost Race novel was of late 19th Century England. I am not a sociologist, so I can only offer amateur guesses as to why. But there it is.

This brings us to Lee Weinstein's "regular" theory, which is the final strand in this present ball of yarns.

Lee Weinstein is a friend of mine, an occasional book reviewer for SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, and the author of one very good story, "The Box", in WHISPERS II, edited by Stuart Schiff (Doubleday). He also is a purveyor of Silly Theories, one of which goes like this:

"What kind of bird is that?" he asks.

"A crow," I say.

"And those?"

"A sparrow, a grackle, a starling and a finch."

"Well, what about a regular

IF YOU REALLY
WANT TO KNOW,
TAKE OFF YOUR
PANTS AND SIT
ON MY COOL,
CONVEX FACE.



bird? You know, two wings, a beak, a tail, two feet. Not any particular kind, just a regular bird."

That might be described as the theory of Platonic archetypes retold in the manner of Chico Marx, but I think there is something in it. I think it can be applied to literature.

What about a regular fantasy?

I decided to find one. I searched among the piles of review copies I receive for three fantasy novels which would seem to have no distinguishing features. A prerequisite would be that the authors would have to be toally unknown to me. The artwork on the covers and the blurbs should suggest only a standard package of pre-determined elements. Two elements of non-randomness entered into this experiment: I was in a bit of a hurry, so I picked one book because it was shorter than most of the others. I also wanted to sample one from each major genre publisher: Ace, Pocket Books and Del Rey.

My selections were:

THE LIGHTS OF BARBRIN by Joseph Burgo. Timescape. The copyright date is 1978, but this seems to be a reprint. 192 ppp., \$2.50. This is the short one. Short books did not cost \$2.50 in 1978.

SHADOW MAGIC by Patricia C. Wrede. Ace, 1982, 279 pp., \$2.50.

THE WIZARD IN WAITING by Robert Don Hughes, Del Rey, 357 pp., \$2.75.

Then I set out to read them. What started out as a neat idea for a column turned into a grueling experience.

I never managed to finish THE LIGHTS OF BARBRIN. The cover blurb calls it a "lyrical fantasy of one man's mission against the force that chokes all life." Well, lyrical it is not, and the only thing I found choking all life was Burgo's prose. He is decidedly ill at ease with the English language. It is also evident within a page or two that he has no powers of observation. He starts out with a raiding party encamped within sight of an enemy village. Someone shakes the hero awake. He has to get dressed before he's fit for breakfast. Now you would think anyone who slept in such a circumstance would do so fully clothed, with weapons by his side, ready to spring up in case of an attack. But no ... breakfast is cooked over a fire, supposedly too small to be seen by the enemy, but it being dawn, I wonder about the smoke, or why the enemy hasn't posted look-

outs in the hills surrounding the village, since these raids are fairly common. At breakfast, our hero "ate the fried grinil, though he had long learned to hate the ever-present smoked bird flesh." It would seem that Burgo doesn't know the difference between fried meat and smoked. Later on, he does seem to know what a smoke house is, so this must be just another bit of clumsy writing.

The opening is larded with pages and pages of turgid exposition. The raid goes badly. The enemy was prepared, being not as dumb as the good guys. (Later on a story of sorts emerges. Our hero, Ehred, is a particularly wimpy version of that old stand-by, the discontented young man who doesn't share the values of his society or fit in anywhere, but has longings which direct him to adventure beyond the narrow confines of the place he grew up in. There's nothing particularly wrong with using such a figure. Clarke's AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT is a classic featuring one.

But Borgo's kid is never believable for an instant. His big problem is that he does not share the battle-frenzy and general community spirit of his kinfolk. He just wanders away from the raid. Even when an enemy tries to set fire to the village (Burgo seems to think that one guy can set enough of a fire that the sparks will burn down the whole village and incinerate everybody before the alarm is raised; my guess is that accidental fires must happen. A thatch roof goes up. Maybe somebody in the house in question is killed but this raises such a ruckus that it wakes up the rest of the village long before stray sparks set every other roof aflame), he is able to warn someone, but he can't participate in the fight. He also does not seem to do any work, such as killing the migratory birds which provide the basis of the local diet. Instead, he just moons around alone, Being Sensitive. No one raises the possibility that he is just a goddamn coward and lazy. Then again, none of this makes any sense in terms of human behavior.

Our hero does have very good hearing, though. The villagers burn and eat the would-be arsonist. Even though Ehred is standing a good distance away, he can hear them ripping flesh off and chomping away. Just try that. Tear a drumstick off a cooked turkey. How much noise does it make? How much noise does chewing make?

And so on, and so on. Burgo fails again and again in the real-

istic details. He cannot describe a forest or a hillside or a beach convincingly enough to make a scene seem real. His people are not real. He fails utterly to touch down in reality, which is more essential in a fantasy novel than in any other kind. Otherwise, if there is no anchor to reality, the story loses all dramatic power. The reason THE LORD OF THE RINGS works, and many inferior fantasies don't, is that Tolkein could describe a forest at night or what it's like to sit by a fire, or a snowstorm well enough for the setting to seem real.

As for the fantastic elements, Burgo's hero seems to have a lot of visions, so vaguely and muddily described that the reader has a hard time following them. (Suggestion: If you're going to write visions, go read the Old Testament first. Learn to be particularly clear, so that the mysterious elements are vividly in front of the reader.) There are some ruins nearby, of vast and ancient cities, the inhabitants of which, we are told, in one of the expository lumps, all went mad. Far, far away is what sounds like a repository of ancient learning, to which villagers send their misfits. (At this point, if this were science fiction, it would start turning into an idiot's version of THE LONG TOMORROW.)

Generic characteristics: The setting is never-never land. The society is vaguely medieval, but without any distinct medieval features, like feudalism or religion. It's the standard fantasy setting. The magic, such as it is, is standard fantasy magic. But, curiously, the book has none of the characteristics which the anti-fantasy reactionaries have gotten up in arms about of late. It is dreadful, true, but its failings are the common ones of bad writing. There are many space operas that are no better.



SHADOW MAGIC by Patricia Wrede is at least vaguely competent. Burgo is on a low slush-pile level. With a little training, Wrede should be just right to work on a literary assembly-line. She's also a little short on observation. A band of kidnappers, having made off with a princess, are fleeing through a forest. They have gone through an elaborate ruse to throw off pursuit, but still they are deep in enemy territory. When they camp, they light a roaring fire

Don't would-be fantasy writers ever read anything like NORTHWEST PASSAGE? Maybe a western or two? When I was a kid I used to read what you might call "easterns," that is adventure stories usually set in New England during the French and Indian Wars or thereabouts. I learned very early why you don't light a bonfire when trying to evade pursuers in a forest.

But aside from a few such slips, and sometimes strikingly bad phrases ("she said freezingly." Page 37. Did her teeth chatter?), the book has a bland competence. There is no texture, but a kind of television realism, acceptable for the moment. The plot, aside from involving a kidnapped princess, has to do with this kingdom which is threatened by evil invaders from outside, who have been growing bolder of late. It seems that sorcerers (who lack faces, and crumble into empty clothing when killed) have gotten hold of these talismans, you see, of which there were twelve in the distant past, two of which sank with an island, one of which was destroyed with a volcano, the other nine of which have been scattered, but now are being brought together. To stop this vile manace, a mixed crew of good guys must enlist the assistance of a race of short, furry wood-elves called Wyrds, and the more mysterious race called the Shee ... stop me if you've heard this before.

The setting is again the very routine quasi-medieval land devoid of any discernable culture. The characters are types. The emotional tone is non-committal. The author sometimes has trouble controlling point of view, but otherwise writes tolerably. She shows promise as a technician, where Burgo does not. If SHADOW MAGIC possessed any shred of originality, insight, beauty, wit, cleverness or emotional power, I might have enjoyed it. But it is such a standard product that I now understand why Pocket Books didn't have to issue a No Frills Fantasy. This is it.

THE WIZARD IN WAITING is far

and away the best of my three random selections. It even begins with an original notion, as a sentient castle returns to consciousness in the first few pages. Hughes is a quite competent writer. He is even witty on occasion. His descriptions describe. His use of language is never outstanding, but it is perfectly serviceable, which is what you'd expect from a well-crafted generic product. I came away from this book with the impression that Del Rey Books is definitely in the standard fantasy business, but Lester knows what he's doing. This book will have the desired effect on the projected audience, and probably do rather well. I found it boring after a while, though, because again, the setting is the same standard costume Middle Ages with the culture removed, the characters are types, and the plot, involving a usurper queen, a rightful heir, intrigue and magic, was a bit too routine to hold my interest for 357 pages. Hughes does have a certain superficial inventiveness, but that's all. There's no depth in this book, no particular insight, no ... to use the term common among fantasy advocates ... no magic. There is nothing special about this book the way there is about THE LAST UNCORN or THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER.

This brings me to my conclusion about Genre Fantasy. It has the outward trappings copied from the great fantasies of the past, even as most of the later Gothics and Lost Race romances copied the trappings from their seminal influences, but the characteristics which actually made those classics great are totally absent. Either they are beyond the grasp of GF writers or such writers aren't even aware of them. The most striking thing about these three books is that they have no mythopoeic quality whatever.

This is the core of good fantasy, why such stories can be more beautiful, more intense than anything else in literature. C.S. Lewis tells us that myth transcends allegory, in that allegory may have only the meaning the author has put into it, while a myth may have meaning the author hasn't discovered yet. It goes deep into the subconscious and as a characteristic of literature, may ultimately be something no one can explain, only recognize, in the sense that if you have to be told that a sunset is beautiful, you will never understand. To have this quality, a

book doesn't even have to be particularly well written. SHE, as Lewis points out, is actually rather badly written, but it has this quality, and it lives. (And, I would add, the genre spawned by its imitators lacks this quality, and does not, for the most part.) Patricia McKillip's THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD has this quality and stands head and shoulders above the rest of genre fantasy, even though it has the standard setting, skimpily detailed. A balance has to be struck, of course, even when the mythopoeic element is present. There has to be some element of realism, convincingly portrayed, as there has been in fantasy all the way back to Apuleius, so that the reader is drawn into the story and comes to believe that the characters are human beings, but beyond that it's the myth-making that counts.

These genre-fantasy writers aren't even trying. This new genre, which is as distinct a branch of fantasy as the Gothic or the Lost



Race novel or any of the several varieties of science fiction, strikes me as pretty feeble stuff. The inherent weakness of a fantasy story is that, because we know that the elements in it are impossible, the ideas can never be interesting for their own sake, beyond the sort of superficial gimmickry of Robert Don Hughes. An inept science fiction story can sometimes get by on the strength of its ideas. Patricia Wrede's actual writing talents would be about average for science fiction. If she could come up with a neat idea or two, or some interesting speculation, for all that her novel is cookie-cutter stuff, she might have gotten by in science fiction. But "ideas" in fantasy are more ethereal things. You have to be able to do poetic things with them. Otherwise the result is like perfectly competent but totally uninspired, totally conventional verse. The only poets worth reading are the inspired ones. I think this is also true of fantasy writers.

So Genre Fantasy just muddies the waters. It creates a definite niche for fantasy in the bookstore which is a good thing, because it makes it all that much easier for a really good fantasy novel to be published. But it also makes it harder to find the good ones. I don't think I'll repeat my experiment, at least not for a while. I'll try to find the good books and use this column to tell you about them.



AND NOW A WORD ABOUT SOME GOOD BOOKS --

CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH

By Gene Wolfe
Timescape, 1983, 317 pp., \$15.95

This is the final volume of THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN. I don't have a lot more to say about it, having reviewed the work as a whole earlier. If you've come in late, you absolutely must go back and read all four volumes in order. This one will be incomprehensible otherwise. The work is more of a four-volume novel than a true tetralogy.

You'll be glad to know that the level of writing in the fourth volume remains extremely high. Wolfe's powers of invention never flag, and he retains his wonderful sense of image and texture. While the story takes a decidedly science-fictional turn, it has all

the characteristics of a first-rate fantasy. It has mythological depth and refreshingly, excitingly, the myth turns toward the future and the stars, rather than to an imaginary past. It is "like" a lot of other fantasies, but also triumphantly different.

There are some awesomely good parts: a visit with a wizard who seems to have come from an alternate time-track; vivid scenes of quasi-futuristic battles; stories within the stories, including a charming legend, "The Armiger's Daughter" (which you may have seen in the first George Scithers AMAZING), and more surprisingly, a story told by an Ascian. The Ascians, you may recall, are the people with whom the Commonwealth has been fighting a protracted, distant war during the last three books. Now we plunge into the war itself, and discover that the enemy are super-Maoists, whose entire vocabulary consists of officially-approved platitudes. But subtly, the people have turned this into a true language, and in a casual display of the kind of technical skill which leaves other writers weak with envy, Wolfe brings off a comprehensible story in these terms.

Most of the mysteries raised in the previous volumes are solved. More are raised. The same failings we have seen before are still present: The story has very little dramatic tension and tends to ramble. More seriously, one of the major conflicts, that involving a woman who has been chasing after our hero since the first book, is solved quite arbitrarily, and offstage. This is the one aspect of THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH which is likely to prove genuinely disappointing.

But other than that, the book has at a near-genius level, all those attributes which I found lacking in the three specimens of genre fantasy considered above.

THE EYE OF THE HERON

By Ursula K. LeGuin
Harper & Row, 1983, 179 pp., \$11.95

This short novel was first published in Virginia Kidd's anthology, MILLENNIAL WOMEN in 1978. I reviewed it in depth at the time, in this same column. It's minor LeGuin, enormously readable, with a beautifully-described setting on an extra-solar planet, but no really memorable characters. The prob-

PLATE ARMOR GIVES ME INDIGESTION EVERY TIME.



lem might be that the story has so much of a Point To Make that the other aspects don't quite get going under their own steam. It's about the problems besetting society. LeGuin is too realistic to make everything work out the way Pacifists would like them to. When push comes to shove, the heavies start shooting and the Pacifists get killed. Like THE DISPOSSESSED, THE EYE OF THE HERON is certainly an ambiguous depiction of the type of society it superficially seems to advocate. Unfortunately, the setting, for all it may be more interesting than the story sometimes, enables the author to duck all the problems raised. The Pacifists set off, pioneer-like, into the wilderness, where they can live as they choose beyond the reach of their oppressors. Of course, on Earth this hasn't been possible in a long time, if it ever was.

2010: ODYSSEY TWO

By Arthur C. Clarke
Del Rey Books, 1982, 291 pp., \$14.95

Purely a command performance, written not because the author has anything more to say on the subject at hand, but because he succumbed to the temptation of several million bucks, even as you or I would. His writing ability is very much in evidence. The book is a grand tour of the solar system, superbly described. You might think of it as a prose version of an episode of COSMOS. Surely Arthur Clarke has become the Loren Eiseley of outer space.

But as a novel, it leaves something to be desired. The characters are actually better developed than many in Clarke novels, but they have nothing to do but watch as events unfold around them. There are lots of nice touches, but nice touches do not make a story. All the mysteries of 2001 are ex-

plained, often in more detail than you'd like. (The details, by the way, fit those of the movie, not the original book, where the two differed.) Some readers will be upset to see most of the potential of the Star Child casually tossed aside. He doesn't influence the future of humanity any, but just works for the folks who made the monoliths as they foster a new sentient race on Europa.

2001 ended with the promise of a whole new age dawning, perhaps a quantum leap in human evolution about to occur. 2010 comes on like SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE's Emily Litella and says, "Never mind!"

TITUS GROAN, GORMENGHAST and TITUS ALONE

By Mervyn Peake
Overlook Press, 1982
Respectively 506, 511, 263 pages.
\$18.95 each.

The Gormenghast Trilogy or more specifically, the first two books of it (it was never intended as a trilogy anyway) justifies all those old cliché's: "There is nothing like it in all of literature," "A unique reading experience," "Impossible to describe in a short space." All these things are actually true. I think it's the MOBY DICK of 20th Century literature. Nothing else approaches it in its nearly lumatic intensity. Peake had a genius for making the grotesque live, for the poetry of prose. His vision was intense, and uniquely his own. C.S. Lewis clasped his work among those which "are actual additions to life; they give, like certain rare dreams, sensations we never had before, and enlarge our conception of the range of possible experience."

The Gormenghast books have been compared to Tolkein ever since THE LORD OF THE RINGS was a big success in paperback and Ballantine started looking for more trilogies. This isn't fair either to Peake or Tolkein. They have little in common. If you come to Peake expecting the Tolkein sort of fantasy, you're going to be very surprised, to say the least, but perhaps you'll find your horizons enlarged in the manner Lewis describes. So go and read.

The Overlook Press edition is made from the same plates as the early '70s Eyre and Spottiswoode one (British). The interior line drawings by Peake (who was also an extremely accomplished illustrator) came out very well, but the glossy plates are here printed on

regular paper, and lose something. However, the dustjacket art (also by Peake) reprint from the first editions (1940, 1950, 1959) and are much more attractive than the Eyre and Spottiswoode ones. But the more significant point is that this version represents the first American printing of the restored text of TITUS ALONE. When that book was first published, Peake was already ill from the disease which later killed him. The publisher chopped out a lot of material in an effort to make it coherent. In 1970 Langdon Jones produced a restored text, carefully edited which includes whole chapters not in the American editions. TITUS ALONE is much weaker than the first two volumes, either because as Lin Carter suggests, its conception is faulty, or simply because Peake was ailing as he wrote it and wasn't at his best; but still, this is the edition you should read.

ON STORIES AND OTHER ESSAYS ON LITERATURE

By C.S. Lewis
Edited by Walter Hooper
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich
153 pp., \$4.95

People who haven't read Lewis tend to dismiss him as a Christian propagandist, but that sort of short-sightedness is just the kind of thing he calls to question in books like this one. He was one of the most lucid, sensible critics ever to enter the fray. He was more interested in providing understanding than building up his reputation, which is a large part of why he was so good. It seems to me that the best critics are always people who are capable of writing something other than criticism and do most of the time.

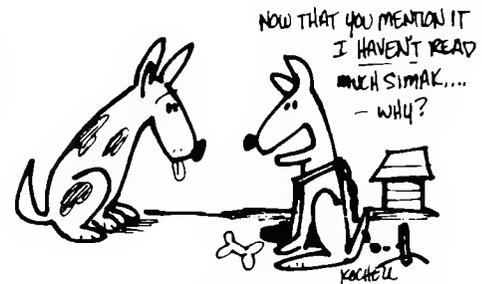
Topics include Tolkein, Charles Williams, methods of writing for children, science fiction, the nature of storytelling, "The Mythopoeic Gift of H. Rider Haggard," George Orwell, "Different Tastes in Literature" (who else could write an essay like that without seeming pompous and actually say something worthwhile in the process?), criticism, etc. There is even a three-way dialogue on science fiction between Lewis, Kingsley Amis and Brian Aldiss. He was far more favorably inclined toward science fiction than many people think. In fact, he was the most tolerant of critics in all fields.

He is also immensely quotable. I've been quoting him and alluding to him throughout this column.

In light of recent controversies in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, here is a quote for Elton Elliott:

"It is very dangerous to write about a kind you hate. Hatred obscures all distinctions. I don't like detective stories and therefore all detective stories look much alike to me: If I wrote about them I should therefore infallibly write drivel" (P. 56)

Actually, Lewis was talking about establishment attacks on science fiction there, but the shoe's on the other foot now.



SMALL PRESS

MAGAZINES

Reviewed By
Darrell Schweitzer

Enough time has gone by since my last column, that issues of just about every major small press title has accumulated. So I will just explain briefly, for newcomers, that what I mean by a "small press magazine" is a periodical which publishes professional quality fiction but is not distributed on newsstands. Even though dozens of titles have appeared since the early Seventies, and stories from such magazines keep winning major awards (e.g. Dennis Etchison's "The Dark Country," from FANTASY TALES and FANTASY BOOK, won the British Fantasy and World Fantasy Awards this year), not to mention getting anthologized regularly, there are still, apparently a lot of fans out there who still confuse these things with amateur fanzines, and refuse to read them. There are also a lot of professionals who don't know they exist. To both groups I say: Let me fill you in on the latest news. Have you heard? Dewey lost.

Let's take a look at the current crop:

KADATH #5 is a special issue

devoted to occult detectives. It contains new stories by Manly Wade Wellman (resurrecting his sleuth John Thunstone of WEIRD TALES fame), Brian Lumley, Ardath Mayhar, Brian Mooney and Mike Chinn. All of them except the one by Chinn, which tends toward the broadest slashes of prose and caricaturing on the level of Doc Savage, are quite well written. But I've always had trouble with occult detectives, even the classical ones, like John Silence and Jules de Grandin.

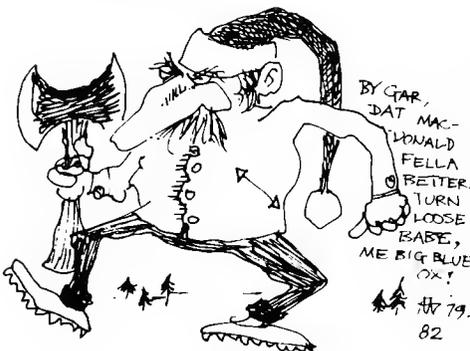
The inevitable pattern in such stories is that, after discovering what the eldritch menace is, the psychic sleuth dispatches it without further ado. There is rarely any complication or suspense. And since the solutions are arrived at by purely magical means which are made up by the author, the endings seem arbitrary. Stoker avoided this problem in DRACULA. Van Helsing is not all-knowing. The count has a chance. There are surprises. But in Wellman's "Rouse him Not", there is this eldritch slime-pit in someone's backyard. Sure enough, the place was once inhabited by a sorcerer, and his demonic familiar is still in the slime. The rest is a foregone conclusion. Thunstone has a magic sword made by St. Dunstan. It proves efficacious.

In Mooney's "The Affair at Dumnamay Hall," there is yet another departed sorcerer causing trouble, this time sucking the life-energy out of a young woman. He too is readily dispatched, but Mooney is a bit more inventive in his details. Brian Lumley's story is a Titus Crow adventure, another of his almost-parody Cthulhu Mythos things. It manages to depart from the formula somewhat, and is strengthened for it, but you're not likely to get any chills. I suppose my favorite is the Mayhar, in which the investigators, having discovered a recurring manifestation in an English country house, decide not to perform an exorcism. No, they plan to set up an exhibition and charge admission. An eminently practical solution to the average haunting, methinks.

Who am I to knock these things? The Jules de Grandin series ran on 90-something stories and made Seabury Quinn the most popular writer in the whole history of WEIRD TALES. Most of these KADATH stories are better done than the typical de Grandin.

If this is the sort of thing you like, this is just what you'll like ... KADATH is, as always, an extremely handsome, large-sized

magazine with a color cover and glossy pages. It's also limited to 500 numbered copies and sure to be a collector's item.



FANTASY BOOK #6 continues the development of one of the most regular of the fantasy magazines. This issue shows FS's tendency toward slapstick, funny fantasy, more reminiscent of FANTASTIC ADVENTURES than UNKNOWN. The stories for the most part have their moments. "Stage Magic" by Richard Mueller has a dragon created inside a washing machine in a laundromat by a magician who forgot to empty the pockets before washing his robe. "Negotiations on a Lower Level" by Mike Hodel has some nice satirical bits about the first diplomatic visit to Hell, before coming to a weak conclusion. Overwhelmingly the best story in the issue is R.A. Lafferty's "Calamities of the Last Pauper," which is about the elimination of poverty from the world of the last pauper's dead body. Unfortunately this defies divine law ("The poor will be with you always") and a Biblical-quality catastrophe occurs. We end with the writer's advice to post-collapse authors about what sort of animal bones they should write on if they want to achieve true elegance. This is about middling-Lafferty, a bit too inclined to lecture, but still very inventive in his unique manner.

The best of the more serious stories is Steve Rasnic Tem's "On a Path of Marigolds," which is almost very moving. It has a lot of good touches, but is severely flawed by clumsy use of flashbacks. A story line like this should go straight to the heart. We should not be left trying to figure out what's going on.

There's also a Hyborian Age tale by Raul Garcia Capella, who has been doing these things for 20 years or so. And "But I don't Do Dragons" by Kathleen Sky is a mod-

estly well-done routine fantasy, light in tone without being actually funny. It falls between two stools.

The only really bad story is "The Years Like Rain" by Michael Davies, which seems to have stumbled in out of third-season STAR TREK. Get this: Circe on another planet, and by an amazing coincidence all the characters' names just happen to almost spell names from Homer. And they even talk in STAR TREK gobbledeygook. It's "convergence of species" rather than "parallel evolution", which was the excuse for some of the stupidest ST episodes. As a story, it's dull and utterly, utterly unbelievable in the way that something about a flat Earth with edges never can be. It pretends to be plausible and the hokum shows through.

Another fairly average issue.

FANTASY TALES #11 seems a little below par, perhaps because it was preceded by an unusually strong issue. #10, still available, featured a long novelet by Ramsey Campbell which proved that despite all odds, it is still possible to be original and creative within the Cthulhu Mythos, and the key to it is not including self-companions to the Necronomicon or large accumulations of tentacles. There's also a good Manly Wade Wellman story in that issue.

Issue #11 starts off with a sentimental ghost story by H. Warner Munn, reprinted from WEIRD TALES. It is heralded as a "classic" on the cover, when it is actually nothing of the sort. It's one of those short fillers Farnsworth Wright used to stick in the back of the magazine, and aside from a reprinting in THE DIBBERSIFER, it hasn't seen the light of day till now.

The title is "A Sprig of Rosemary" in it, and there's a little girl named Rosemary in it, who dies and is led away by the ghost of an old miser only she would take pity on. Very much the sort of thing you'd expect to find in a Victorian family magazine. As Oscar Wilde remarked about the death of Little Nell

For sheer weirdness, the best story in the issue is "Dead to the World" by Allan A. Lucas, which is about a guy who finds that all the openings in his body are sealing up. All of them. Lucas almost, but not quite gets beyond the medical absurdity, and again, almost makes the story mean some-

thing, in the sense that Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" is more than just an account of how somebody turned into a bug.

None of the other stories stand out. "The Story of Lallia the Slave Girl" by "Dray Prescott"/ Alan Burt Akers/Ken Blumer, is an episode in the Scorpio series, and "The Storm Devil of Lan-Kern" by Peter Tremayne is part of a series of his. Neither made me want to go read the series. "Legacy of Evil" by Peter Bayliss is quite well written but is just one of those stories about a young man who inherits his ancestral abode and too late discovers the dread secret My feeling is that if someone were to compile a reference book entitled THE COMPLETE GENEALOGIES AND LIFE HISTORIES OF ABHORRED SORCERERS, WITCHES AND PERSONS UNPOPULAR IN SMALL RURAL VILLAGES, such protagonists would be saved a lot of trouble.

John R. Lansdale contributes very routine sword & sorcery.

My feeling is that if you want to sample FANTASY TALES -- and any magazine which has now won four awards and been nominated for scads more is worth sampling -- you ought to send away for the tenth issue.

WHISPERS 17/18 is another special double issue, this time devoted to Stephen King. (The previous one was the Ramsey Campbell issue.) It is reportedly selling very well, and will no doubt become a fabulous collectors' item. It is a must for all King fans -- all two or three million of them. Alas, the print run is not large enough to meet the demand.

The King material consists of an article by King on THE SHINING, a hitherto unpublished prologue to that novel, and a short story, "It Grows on You," which is a revision of an early story from a literary magazine. The short story is a trifle too synoptic for my taste, and the prologue is synoptic too, but it works a lot better, outlining the long, unfortunate history of the Overlook Hotel before the festivities of the novel begin. Much of the power of King's writing is in evidence, and the overwhelming impression from this (and also, to a lesser extent, from the short story) is that Stephen King is one of the few people in the field who really knows how to haunt a place. Most fictional haunted houses just happen to have

a ghost or a Thing in residence but King's bad places build up long-lasting resonances of very human pain and frustration.

The rest of the issue is only unsatisfactory, mostly, I suppose, because one comes to WHISPERS with extremely high expectations and there is nothing thunderously brilliant this time. Most of the stories are merely competent. The best of them is Lisa Tuttle's "The Other Room," which gracefully and atmospherically mixes familiar themes and elements -- an extra room in a house not everyone can

see, childhood fears, ghosts and vampires -- and produces superior, albeit very traditional results. "An End to Dreaming" by Janet Morris is about the death of the last sorcerer in the world. It too makes good use of image and atmosphere, but it lacks that extra something that makes, say, Tanith Lee's best short work stand out. "A Night on the Docks" by Freff tells how the children of a town torment and kill a vampire. By the end of the story they're more horrible than the vampire. "The Dancer in the Flames" by David Drake mixes two of Drake's famili-



SD SPANXIA

ar settings, Vietnam and medieval Europe, but with only ordinary results. Basically, it's another man-fascinated-and-destroyed-by-supernatural-phenomenon story, no better or worse than countless others. There are several other stories which read well enough, but fail to stand out. Surprisingly, a few of them don't read well enough. Robert Chilson's "In Quest of Something" introduces a character named Colan the Caliginian, which makes the reader expect a parody. But no, it's not funny at all, just a routine sword & sorcery adventure. "Lovey's Rival" by Juleen Brantingham tells of eldritch doings among sailors in a very Old Salty style, which gets to be wearisome after a while, particularly since everything is told in a synoptic, second-hand manner, with few opportunities for the reader to actually get into the story. Steve Rasnic Tem's "Preparation for the Game" runs through variations of the same bizarre situation over and over again, without making a bit of sense. It seems to me that in horror fiction, as elsewhere, the reader has to have some idea of what is going on and why, or he will lose interest after a while.

All in all, a comedown from the previous few issues. Interesting King material, Very good graphics and production values. The rest would do credit to most small mags, but are a bit below par for WHISPERS.

The third issue of INTERZONE shows that magazine developing along lines I predicted in an earlier column. INTERZONE specializes in "odd" stories which don't fit into any category, but which can still be termed "imaginative." Frequently they're of very high quality. For example, "The Dissemblers" by Gary Kilworth is an effectively atmospheric tale about a man obsessed with death to the point that he keeps almost hanging himself in hope that he will catch a glimpse beyond the Veil. This is effectively contrasted with the obsession of the narrator, who has escaped the frustrations of Western life by becoming a Muslim. Does the death-seeker find something at the end or not? He is certainly changed. But the actual fantastic element of this story is slight and ambiguous. I can see a science fiction magazine turning this story down out of hand. A fantasy magazine might consider it too marginal. But it's a very good story, and that is where INTERZONE comes in.

David Garnett's "Saving the Universe" is essentially about science fiction. It's an absurdist piece set at a British SF con during a "time war," as each side hurls temporal-dislocation devices at the other. This doesn't seem to interrupt the con much, for all the hero steps into the bar and finds himself in the 19th Century at one point. The characters are all writers and the like, many of them real people disguised. They bemoan the state of current science fiction a lot. In the end the war becomes a more orthodox nuclear one. It's all rather amusing.

Equally amusing, in an even odder sense is Nicholas Allan's "Cheek to Cheek" in which two lovers awake one morning to find their genitalia stuck together. This is for people who like well-written fantastic erotica.

Disappointing are Angela Carter's "Overture to A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" because it fails to add up to anything, for all that it presents a few memorable images, and Josephine Saxton's "No Coward Soul" because it is incoherent. This latter is a surprise, because Ms. Saxton has done excellent work in the past (look for "The Pressure of Time" in NEW DIMENSIONS 1 or any of her novels), but the failure of the story is absolute. The pieces don't relate to one another. The characters and situations fail to convince on any level and become tedious as the reader is left wading through a lot of gunk waiting for it all to make some sense. This story should never have been published, but at least it is opaque due to its being badly written rather than the writer's getting arty to hide the fact she has nothing to say, a'la NEW WORLDS. So it is a lapse in judgment rather than a mistake in policy.

In fact the policy of INTERZONE is made reassuringly clear in an editorial in which Malcolm Edwards lays to rest the ghost of NEW WORLDS. Everyone seems to expect INTERZONE to be the resurrection of NEW WORLDS and seems to judge it by those standards. But NEW WORLDS, we must remember, was a failure, not merely in the economic sense, but as Edwards deftly points out, because the writers it fostered not only haven't prevailed and changed the field in their own image, but for the most part they haven't even survived. In short, yes, NEW WORLDS was a revolution, but the rebels lost, and the reason they lost is that they were not, as they claimed, trying to expand the boundaries of imaginative fiction. They were trying

to evade the whole idea of fiction altogether. The result was gibberish. When the fad for gibberish was over, those who did not know how to write stories were no longer able to get published.

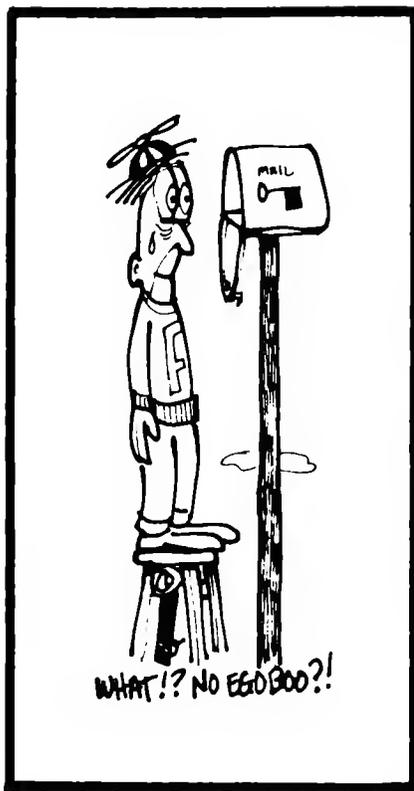
INTERZONE, fortunately, is a magazine of stories, and it may turn out to be a quieter, but more successful revolution.

The third issue of Millea Kenin's OWLFLIGHT is a surprisingly substantial magazine. There is lots of good fantasy in the little magazines because the big-time market for fantasy is inadequate, but the big-time market for science fiction is over-expanded. Yet there are three stories in this issue which would have done credit to IASFM, ANALOG, or F&SF. I wonder how that happened. OWLFLIGHT is now so overstocked with material that it takes options on submissions (i.e. if the story is available in two years, they promise to buy it), so I also wonder if future issues are going to be equally good. Is the chronic shortage of good short fiction caused by Kenin's horading it all?

The three stories:

"The Unified Field Manual" by Richard Grant. This one is about a bunch of jaded aristocrats in a post-holocaust society based on magic going out to visit the mysterious author of an article which implies a Unified Field Theory. Everything is twisted in terms of the peculiar beliefs of the day. The author must claim to have gotten a revelation, and to have based this on the work of the ancients. In fact, she has rediscovered the scientific method and has done her own calculations. This makes her a fraud to her visitors. In the end the narrator decides that it may not be "science" but it's great art. The reason the story works is that Grant can take a gaggle of superficial, chattering people and give them all distinct personalities in a short space. They become true products of their society, and the changing perspectives of the idea of knowledge in the story come across with considerable effect.

"Remembering Kwajalein" by Paul A. Gilster is a very simple story about aliens landing in a small town and seeming to kill all the children there. It is simply very vivid and atmospheric, with good characterization and description, conveying a real sense of mystery and terror. There is a



"surprise" ending which seems an organic part of the whole rather than a cheap tag-on.

"Honcho the Birdbrain" by Bruce Hallock is rather crudely written, with awkward expository passages, but it turns into a well-developed story of a parrot with artificial intelligence. You plug him into a headless robot body, and he's super-smart. Unplug him and he's a parrot. This creates a sometimes-sentient being completely aware of his unique nature. He grows, tries to realize his potential, and the results are tragic. This would be a little above average in ANALOG.

The rest of the issue isn't as good. There's "Covenant" by Mathias Freese, which is completely opaque. I think it's an attempt to do alien viewpoint. "Tourist Trap" by Jay Marshall is well written and slightly amusing, but depends too much on stereotypes of funny aliens and funny/rustic yokel Earthmen. "The Thinking Circle" by Claudia Peck just presents a not very remarkable idea without making a story out of it. "The Raven Mockers" by Stephen Gresham seems to be routine horror, but I gave up halfway through when it was evident that it was because the writer's grasp of language is poor that the atmospheric scenes don't come off and sometimes one has to read a passage three or four times to tell what is going on. Also present in this issue are an interesting essay-interview

by A. Bertram Chandler and Jeffrey Elliot, book reviews and a lot of poetry. The printing and production values are very good. The artwork is mostly mediocre. Still with three very good stories, one sort of OK one, and the Chandler/Elliot piece, this magazine is worthy of your support.

Less interesting is the first issue of PARSEC. This is largely an amateur fiction magazine, devoted to letting fan would-be writers air their attempts (without pay), but there is one (paid for) story by a professional each issue. This time it is "Slow Virus" by Sharon Webb, a routine story about alien spores arriving in a meteorite. Webb completists will want it. Also in addition to the amateur fiction, the issue contains interviews with Walter Tevis and Doug Chaffee, book reviews, and an article by Michael Bishop. The back cover is a painting by Chaffee, reproduced in color.

ASHES AND OTHERS by H.P. Lovecraft and Divers Hands counts as an issue of Robert Price's "pulp thriller and theological journal," CRYPT OF CTHULHU. Normally, I don't cover such things in this column, but this little booklet, (56 pp., small type, digest size) is surely the most important contribution to Lovecraft studies this year. It contains several uncollected Lovecraft "revisions" (i.e. virtual rewrites) of other people's work, plus original versions of some of the more famous revisions and collaborations. The most interesting item is E. Hoffman Price's preliminary version of "Through the Gates of the Silver Key." It's awful, but an important primary source for scholarship. Price, of course, was a very capable and successful writer at the time (as he still is), but with this draft he seemed to be forcing himself into a manner that wasn't his own. Virtually the whole story consists of lectures in other-dimensional geometry. Lovecraft only used it as a guideline for the classic collaboration. He incorporated some elements and discarded others. This differed very much from his other collaborations and revisions, because Price provided him with workable material. The other folks didn't.

H.P. Lovecraft's revision clients were a pretty talentless

crew. The only "revisions" which are any good are those like "The Mound," which H.P.L. wrote wholesale from notes. No one could publish Zealia Bishop's "original version" of "The Mound," for example, because it doesn't exist.

The title story, "Ashes" by C.M. Eddy and H.P.L. was published in WERID TALES in 1924. We are told that when scholars discovered the Lovecraft connection they tried to suppress it, rather like Shakespearians who would dearly love to disprove the authorship of TITUS ANDRONICUS. But actually, it's a routine bit of trash about a mad scientist, and was probably no worse than anything else in WEIRD TALES at the time. What we forget, because the earliest issues are rare, fragile and worth hundreds of dollars (and thus seldom read), is that the earliest issues of WEIRD TALES were pretty trashy. "Ashes" is no worse than some of the lesser stories under H.P.L.'s name that appeared about the same time -- "From Beyond," for instance.

But we are a little far afield. Next time I will try to concentrate on magazines which have not been reviewed in this column before. There are a lot of them. They slither around the room at night in huge piles, muttering elderly curses.



KADATH. Francesco Cova, Corso Aurelio Saffi 5/9, 16128 Genova, Italy. Single copies \$5.00; 4 for \$18.00.

FANTASY BOOK. POB #4193, Pasadena, CA 91106. \$3.00 per copy; 6/\$16.

FANTASY TALES. Stephen Jones, 73 Danes Court, North End Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 OAE, England. \$2.50 per copy.

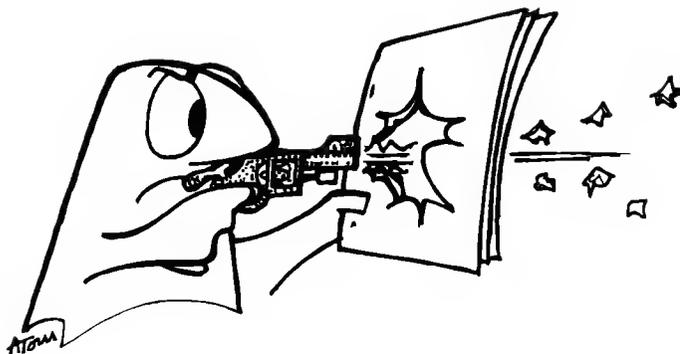
WHISPERS. Stuart Schiff, 70 Highland Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13905. \$5.00 each; 2 double issues/\$8.75.

INTERZONE. American and Canadian subs are \$10.00 per year (4 issues) from 9 Patchin Place, New York, NY 10011.

OWLFLIGHT. Millea Kenin, 1025 55th Street, Oakland, CA 94608. \$3.00 per copy; 4/\$10.00.

PARSEC. Robert Mack Hester. Route #5, box 110, Russellville, AL 35653. \$2.50 per copy.

ASHES AND OTHERS. Robert Price, 35 Elmbrook Place, Bloomfield, NJ 07003. \$2.00. Bob's excellent HPL fanzine, CRYPT OF CTHULHU has no price listed. Send him another two bucks for a sample.



RAISING HACKLES

BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

SCIENCE FICTION IS DYING: CAN
THE PATIENT BE SAVED?

Science fiction is a field in decline. And nowhere is it more apparent than in the failure to capitalize financially on the opportunities offered in the past half decade. With the movie STAR WARS, George Lucas handed the SF field tremendous commercial potential and power. It was pissed away. Why?

I believe it is because science fiction lost sight of what it is and, as a consequence, where it should be going. If you as a person do not know who you are and do not have a clearly defined set of goals many opportunities will go ungrasped. Chances for personal and professional progression will go unrealized. So it is with science fiction, and has been for some time.

But before we can go any further, the question looms: What is science fiction? Lack of a definition has always plagued the field. More so today, I believe, than in the past. Then strong-willed editors like John W. Campbell and Horace L. Gold could impose their personal vision onto the field, vision honed by many years of writing SF before editing. At that time the agreed upon definition was, "SF is what I point to when I mean SF." Today people can't even agree on what to point to when they say SF. Many of today's editors have had little experience reading SF, let alone trying to write it. At no time is a strong clear definition more needed than at the present, a definition that is inclusive without being exclusive. I believe I have come up with that definition:

Science fiction is that branch of literature which responds to the options made possible by scientific and technological change.

In short, SF is all about change. Scientific and technolog-

ical change and the resonations created by this change throughout society. Science fiction by losing sight of this has blundered grievously. Those favorable towards the field have commented many times on how SF looks toward the future. And that that field of literature which concerns itself with the future need never worry since it will always have a future. Well, I say they had better start worrying since, ladies and gents, science fiction doesn't look toward the future anymore -- it looks toward the past. The emperor is buck-stark-naked, folks, and too goddamn many people were too busy slapping themselves on the back and chortling over how Lucas' flick was gonna make them too rich to notice. Well, piss on 'em. I've got the bad news and here it is. Science fiction is a literature which concerns itself with change, as well as the future -- and any literature which concerns itself with change and does not itself change is in trouble.

The key element in any change in science fiction has to be content. Obvious, you say. Well, if it is so bleeding obvious then why the hell hasn't it been done? The world isn't sitting still. I already have a digital watch on the cap of my pen. Soon I'll be able to buy telephones or televisions which'll be small enough to wear on my wrist. Don't tell me science fiction is suffering from shock -- there, there, Amazing, old fellow, don't fret; Unca Tofler'll be here in a minute to make it all feel better -- why? Why do the few stories and novels untrammelled by the disease of fantasy insist on ringing the changes for the ten-thousandth time on an idea Heinlein, Asimov, Sturgeon or van Vogt did better, with more excitement and conviction, in the early Forties?

The reason is that for the last three decades there has been no change in the content of SF. The innovation has almost stopped cold. This was not always the case. In the first quarter-century of science fiction's existence, as a separate genre market, two massive revolutionary changes hit the field. The first came in the late Thirties, almost a decade-and-a-half after Gernsback founded AMAZING STORIES. John W. Campbell took over as editor at ASTOUNDING and he proceeded to revolutionize the field. He insisted on better writing, but here is the important point: He insisted on better thinking as well. No longer could an author haphazardly write about aliens. Campbell insisted that his writers show him aliens that thought as well as a man, but not like a man. He insisted that future societies be carefully extrapolated from the present, not thrown together willy-nilly as is too often the case today.

The two above examples and numerous others show the crucial import of the revolutionary changes Campbell wrought on this field. Changes in thought and preparation on the part of the writer which directly led to changes and improvement in the content of what was being written. If you doubt the seminal influence the Campbellian revolution had on this field, remember time is the ultimate proof. There's a simple way to prove the lasting impact Campbell had on the field. Go to your local library or bookstore, or your own collection if it's large enough, and check the number of stories anthologized from the Forties. Now, check the number of those that appeared in ASTOUNDING against those that did not. You'll find that stories Campbell bought are far more numerous than those of his contemporaries. As a matter of fact, there are more

stories reprinted from ASTOUNDING in the Forties than all of the stories published in all of the magazines combined before Campbell. This is not coincidental.

The second great revolutionary change in content came about through Horace L. Gold, editing GALAXY, in the early Fifties. This involved writers taking a far more critical, often satirical, glance at human society and social institutions. If it seems that Gold was merely fine-tuning certain aspects of the Campbellian revolution that just shows how far Campbell brought the field. Gold without Campbell might have pushed the field as far as Campbell did, although it would probably be a vastly different genre today. The crucial area of content that Gold developed was the cynical downside view of human social progress placed against ongoing scientific and technological change. He opened up the dystopian view of humanity's future. True, Campbell had hinted at this in his stories: "Twilight" and "Night" published in the Thirties under the Don A. Stuart pseudonym. But, as an editor, Campbell had never gone on to fully explore this arena of content the way Horace Gold did.

These two editors shaped and changed the content of this field the way no editor has since. Even the much-ballyhooed and debated New Wave did not radically alter or shape the basic areas of content in this field. It changed the way in which that content was presented to the reader, true enough, but style alone is incapable of providing the change science fiction so desperately needs. In short, my major criticism of the New Wave is that it didn't go far enough. A revolution in science fiction which doesn't address itself to content is not a wave, it is a ripple.

The other major key is the response to the options made possible by scientific and technological change. Given the correct approach it is this response which informs the result and gives us these New-Fashioned Futures.

Because of the failure of science fiction to renovate and evolve its content, the commercial options made possible by STAR WARS have not been grasped. This inevitable commercial stagnation will lead (and in fact already is) to declining sales in both unit and volume. (And by the way, let's get rid of this notion that to be commercial is not to be literate, profound or progressive. Commercialism leads to sales and sales

are what puts food on the table for full-time writers.)

Another reason for the failure to capitalize on the vast new audience created by STAR WARS is because many in science fiction misjudged that audience. Many felt that those viewing STAR WARS time and again were merely fascinated by the romance/adventure/excitement created by the plot. I believe many of them also yearn for extrapolation. High sales for magazines like OMNI and the emergence of new magazines like TECHNOLOGY ILLUSTRATED show there is an audience out there. I believe that when that audience sampled science fiction, they were turned off by the fantasy and the old-fashioned -- even antique -- futures. A lot of the science fiction of the Eighties seems as out of date as the Forties and Fifties -- where an SF character would whip out a slide rule to compute a planetary orbit. It was bad SF then; it's even worse now.



Because of this lack of revolution in content, what we are left with in the field today are two major problems: decadence and stagnation. The approach to content in science fiction stories is decadent and the result is stagnation. The approach is what I call Nostalgia For Yesterday's Tomorrow; the result is Old-Fashioned Futures. How many times have you been reading a novel and felt more than a touch of *deja vu*. It's not

deja vu; you probably have read the premise upon which the content is based somewhere else. This is caused largely by writers who think research for new ideas means going out and buying twenty used SF paperbacks. Now, while that might work for certain movie directors who take polynesian vacations, it is killing science fiction.

The solution is simple, alter the approach and you change the result, just as in golf where your grip determines the angle at which the clubface strikes the ball, making your tee shot end up in the fairway, if done correctly, or off it if not done correctly, so in science fiction the writer's approach determines the result the reader purchases.

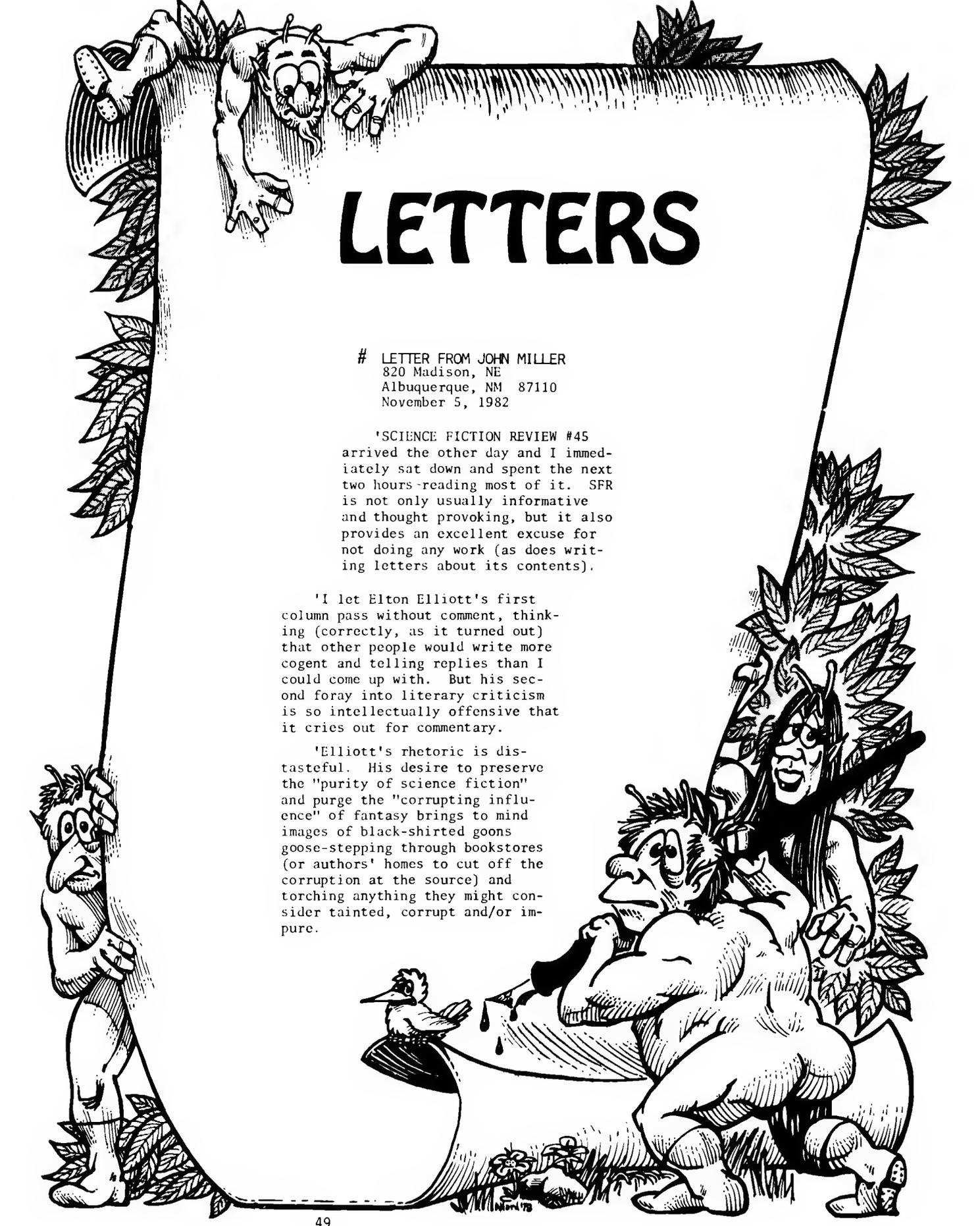
If we refer back to my definition of science fiction we will see that one of the keys to science fiction is the options made possible by scientific and technological change. In order to correctly assess these options the approach the writer needs to take is to extrapolate from Today's Tomorrow -- that is from the best information available today (the present), the author extrapolates what Tomorrow (the future) might be like. (I don't say Tomorrow's Tomorrow or what Tomorrow will be like, because science fiction is not in the business of prophecy.) Having chosen the correct approach the result is inevitable: New-Fashioned Futures.

In conclusion, this article is an introductory outline of ideas and concepts which I will cover in depth in future issues. There will be more coverage on commercialism in SF, on philosophical approaches to writing SF like Today's Tomorrow and New-Fashioned Futures, a piece on why SF seems plagued by "corporate politicians" (this'll involve a little Henderonian corporate-style strategic analysis applied to SF) and finally some remedies to get the field working again.

* * * *

Thanks to those who've sent Christmas cards; they are deeply appreciated. Thanks for your cards and letters with comments on my last two articles. Special thanks to Von Thiel for his kind comments and to Gary Dockter and C.J. Kelly, Jr. for their gracious card.

We will have some interesting surprises next issue. Until then best wishes for the New Year.



LETTERS

LETTER FROM JOHN MILLER
820 Madison, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
November 5, 1982

'SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45 arrived the other day and I immediately sat down and spent the next two hours reading most of it. SFR is not only usually informative and thought provoking, but it also provides an excellent excuse for not doing any work (as does writing letters about its contents).

'I let Elton Elliott's first column pass without comment, thinking (correctly, as it turned out) that other people would write more cogent and telling replies than I could come up with. But his second foray into literary criticism is so intellectually offensive that it cries out for commentary.

'Elliott's rhetoric is distasteful. His desire to preserve the "purity of science fiction" and purge the "corrupting influence" of fantasy brings to mind images of black-shirted goons goose-stepping through bookstores (or authors' homes to cut off the corruption at the source) and torching anything they might consider tainted, corrupt and/or impure.

'His analysis of the functional dynamics of fantasy worlds is unbelievably shallow. Accept for a moment the reality of a fantasy world where magic does work. Granted, this is often a difficult task and the degree to which readers believe in (however momentarily) a particular fantasy world may be taken as one method for gauging the effectiveness of the writer. A character in such a world might indeed "mutter the correct magical spell" to deal with some difficulty facing him.

'But how did the character originally obtain the use of that spell? Answer: through a study of the natural laws of his fantasy continuum, through effort, expended in committing the spell to memory, and finally, through some sort of price paid in terms of mental and physical effort expended when utilizing the spell. This process doesn't differ materially from that utilized by a character in a "science fiction" world who "feeds in the equations she has learned through a lifetime of education" into a computer that charts the proper course and solves her difficulties. Both characters are functioning correctly within the confines or limits of their own particular universes.

'One of the glaring weaknesses of Elliott's articles is that he denies with sweeping generalities that are easy to pontificate about. He offers no concrete examples of good or bad fantasy or science fiction and bastard science fiction. In fact, the third paragraph of his current article suggests that he is totally non-conversant with the field of fantasy. It's foolish and non-productive to criticize from a position of ignorance.

'Having vented my spleen sufficiently on Elliott, I'd like to touch briefly on two book reviews.

'The first is Shaw's review of THE CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR. I'm an archaeologist by profession and it always irks me to see archaeology abused. CLAN may be passable as fiction, but it's laughable as a portrayal of life in Neanderthal times. The dust jacket of the hardcover edition, by the way, tries to maintain CLAN's masquerade as history by gushing about all the research Auel did and all the really neat stuff she personally experienced to learn what life was really like way back then. I could write a point-by-point review of the inaccuracies and outright mistakes contained within this book, but I don't want to ramble on much longer here. I just want to warn all potential consumers to read the

damn thing as a work of fiction and not as an accurate portrayal of life during the Ice Age.

'The second review that caught my eye was Diprete's vapid critique of Simak's THE GOBLIN RESERVATION. First, the review shows that he gave the book only the most cursory reading. There are no talking cats in the book. Second, the review consists of two paragraphs of unsubstantiated opinion. Frankly, why should his bare opinion be something anyone should pay attention to? If you're going to do a book review (particularly if you are going to savage a book) you should at least try to back up opinion with something more substantial than appeals to your own personal writing preferences or prejudices.

'Thanks for an interesting issue.'

((Elton's gut argument goes deeper, I think, though he hasn't made it very clear: he feels the basic orientation of fantasy (backward-looking, frozen) is inherently bad for sf to the extent that those elements "infect" sf which he feels is (or should be!) forward looking, fluid, optimistic, scientific, technological. To Elton, it really doesn't matter how well written a fantasy story is, nor how rigorous is the magic. He says in essence, (As the kid said of spinach in that famous NEW YORKER CARTOON) "I say it's fantasy, and I say to hell with it!")

LETTER FROM LARRY NIVEN
3961 Vanalden Avenue
Tarzana, CA 91356
December 27, 1982

'Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! This is an update on what I've been doing lately. My life has turned interesting lately.

'1) Fred Saberhagen has asked half a dozen friends to write "Berserker" stories. When he's got them, he intends to embed the stories in a novel.

'My contribution is already in, and I've sold it to OMNI. OMNI will publish it in April 1983, as "A Teardrop Falls."

'2) THE INTEGRAL TREES, a novel set in a decidedly strange environment is finished. Del Rey can't find a slot to publish it until early 1984, but I'll probably sell it as a serial: location unknown, sometime in 1983.

'3) FOOTFALL, with Jerry Pournelle, is due at the end of March, 1983.

'4) Jerry and I have invited David Gerrold in on FALLEN ANGELS, a novel we've been talking about for years. We'll be using a good many of our friends as characters, since fandom has become an illegal underground by the time of the story (about 2010 A.D.).

'5) Eighth Day Productions is me and seven collaborators who got together at the last Equicon/Filmcon to design a solar system. The Thraxisp System has appeared as articles in magazines, and will presently become a book. Only two of us are novelists: Paul Preuss is writing a set of stories from Thraxisp history, and I'll be writing continuity. The rest are artists. I expect most of your readers have seen our globe, sculpture, paintings, etc. at conventions.

'6) A Ringworld role-playing game is under construction from Chaosium Inc. A Ringworld comic book by Larry Todd may have run into trouble. Meanwhile, one Robert Mandell is at work on a feature-length animation of Ringworld, using Japanese animators, to be final-cut in New York.

* * * *

'I'm not sure I ever said this before, so --

'You've been sending me SCI-



ENCE FICTION REVIEW since I was a novice. You discovered me early. The ego enhancement was valuable to me: It gave me the sense that what I was trying to do was worthwhile. Thank you.'

((FALLEN ANGELS sounds fascinating; fandom hasn't had a top-level "Tuckerized" novel published in a loooong time.))

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road
Strafford, PA 19087
November 3, 1982

'I don't like the implication in your reply to my letter (in SFR #45) that I am claiming that fantasy is a superior form of literature read by inherently superior people. That would be exactly the same sort of narrowness I am condemning in Elton Elliott. My attitude toward science fiction, as I think you know, is extremely favorable and optimistic. While it is true that you'll find more fantasy than science fiction in what is acknowledged to be the world's great literature, and fantasy is certainly a more universal form, I see no reason why science fiction cannot be that good also. I think it can be. This brings us back to the hackneyed old question: "Will science fiction ever produce its Shakespeare?" Yes, I think it will. THE TEMPEST is fantasy. I think that somebody, someday, will produce a work of science fiction that is that good. Already there were science fiction works which I am sure will live for centuries and be recognized as among the major works of the 20th Century. Unlike, say, Michael Moorcock, who has stated in several articles that he does not think that science fiction can ever be as rich or satisfying as the very best mainstream novels (if someone insists, I will find the quote; I think it's from a NEW WORLDS editorial). I see no inherent limitations in the form, or even the fact that it is published as genre fiction. After all, Elizabethan theatre was a genre too.

'But when you raise the subject of superior readers, I would say that, yes, I would consider an open-minded reader, who is not willing to dismiss most of the world's great literature out of hand, who is willing to read beyond the narrowest confines of the commercial SF genre, to be a person of superior taste to Elton Elliott.

'This time Elliott comes off as a virtual caricature of a reac-

tionary fan, who is desperately afraid that "his" field will be contaminated by outside influences. In the 1960s, such people opposed any use of "mainstream" techniques in SF, lest it pollute the precious bodily fluids of the field. Now, with the same sort of hysteria, Elliott resents the use of fantasy techniques. (Aside, lest I be called the pot calling the kettle black: During the New Wave era, I did not exactly welcome all that was going on. But my objection was that writers were displaying fancy technique for its own sake, in order to hide the fact that they had nothing to say. Those who produced innovations and widened the range of the field, I approved of. If you actually go back and read what I wrote during the late 60s and early 70s, you'll find favorable reviews of STAND ON ZANZIBAR, CAMP CONCENTRATION, THE BLACK CORRIDOR, BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD and even A CURE FOR CANCER. All of which makes my reactionary credentials rather shaky.)

((Uh, what is a fantasy writing technique? To me technique in writing is using the tools of writing--- characterization, suspense, plotting, technical scene development, pacing, etc., and they can be used (must be used) in any kind of fiction writing.

((Style is the individual's personal way of using those tools.

((And content---themes, ideas, etc. are the material molded, carpentered, shaped by the techniques and style of the author.))

'Well, no field of writing can do anything but die if it remains closed off and impervious to cultural trends. If it is influenced by no other forms of writing, it will soon become unreadable to all but a very few. Sorry, Elton Elliott, but you can't keep anything pure of outside influences unless you pickle it in formaldehyde. That means that if science fiction is to live and grow, it must incorporate the fantasy influences, until a synthesis is achieved, as it was at the end of the New Wave period.

'Elliott's charges this time are very, very similar to those used by English teachers who want to prove that science fiction is not "good literature." The argument goes like this: Science fiction provides no insight into the human condition because in a typical story there is a made-up problem (an outburst of piffle plague makes robots malfunction) which is followed by a completely arbitrary

MY MISSION, SHOULD I CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT, IS TO SLAY THE LITERARY DRAGON ELTON T. ELLIOTT.

WHERE'S MY PROPELLOR HELMET AND ZAP-GUN?



wish-fulfillment sort of solution. (The scientist hero discovers a new ray and zaps the piffle virus.)

'Sound familiar?

'Your claim, Dick, that fantasy is written by literateurs who despise the "pulp" mode is groundless. First of all, there is a lot of pulp fantasy, by whatever definitions you care to use. Some pulp fantasists also wrote science fiction. Clark Ashton Smith is an obvious example. His fantasy, typically, has none of the characteristics Elliott attributes to the field.

'The reason that there is so much fantasy and so much better fantasy is, simply, that it is a more universal and older form, less dependent on a certain place and set of social conditions (i.e. science fiction only exists in scientifically advanced, industrialized countries; it is a literary response to the industrial revolution, while fantasy is produced by a wider variety of stimuli). Therefore, by sheer random chance, more writers of genius have worked in the fantasy field than in science fiction, simply because there have been more fantasy writers than science fiction writers.

'It is no fault of science fiction that fantasy had a 4,000-year head start. If we count oral tradition, fantasy had perhaps a half-million-year head start.

'I should also point out that in America for most of this century fantasy was not the "in" thing among the literati, and any fantasy writer was very much going against the grain. Literature only began to revert to normal in the 1960s.

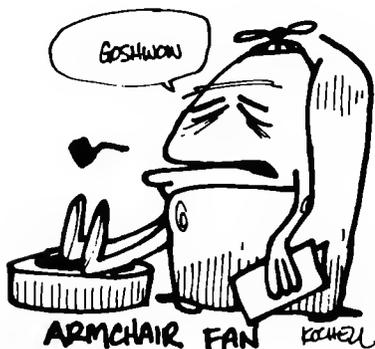
'You are probably right that the best fantasy isn't wildly commercial. Peake, Dunsany, Machen,

etc. were never best-sellers. I don't think Twain's THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER will ever be as widely read as HUCKLEBERRY FINN or LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

'Ed Rom is certainly wrong about fantasy being "easier" because the elements are part of common folklore. Very little fantasy deals with common folklore. Some horror fiction does, but for the most part the folklore elements in fantasy are foreign, and have to be learned. Norse elves or Greek satyrs are not part of the common folklore. Classicists know of them, but there aren't many of these. The rest of the public learns of them from reading.

'C.J. Cherryh mentioned something on a panel at the World Fantasy Con which is relevant: She was traveling in Greece at night when suddenly a huge dripping thing loomed up out of the darkness. It was an enormous dredge, working in a river without lights. But the mixture of awe and terror that one would have at such a sight or even feel slightly when hearing about it, is universal. Similarly, (on another panel) Jane Yolen told of being in an olive grove (also in Greece) at sunset, watching the shadows slowly lengthen, so that the changing light seemed to make the gnarled trunks writhe as if something (a dryad) were inside, trying to get out. That too, is universal. There is no reason why science fiction can't do so, but it seems that fantasy is gaining ground because it is simply more emotionally and psychologically valid than bland, run-of-the-mill engineering science fiction. It is more human.

'If science fiction writers are afraid of losing their audience to fantasy, they'll just have to shut up and hit the typewriters, until they turn out stories which do everything fantasy does, only better, while at the same time preserving uniquely science-fictional characteristics.



'On the subject of the World Fantasy Con, the award winners were as follows:

Novel: LITTLE BIG by John Crowley;

Novella: "The Fire When it Comes" by Parke Godwin;

Short Story: "Do the Dead Sing?" by Stephen King and "The Dark Country" by Dennis Etchison (tie);

Special, Professional: Ed Ferman;

Special, Amateur: Paul Allen and Robert Collins (FANTASY NEWS-LETTER);

Best Anthology: ELSEWHERE, Editor Terri Windling;

Best Artist: Michael Whelan.

#

'Other matters: I would agree with Ian McDowell that I handled the Malzberg affair of some years back quite badly. Nothing I said was anything less than what is now the standard opinion, and the only thing remarkable was that I said it about a year and a half before everyone else did. (During which time I received a large number of congratulatory letters and at every convention I went to, complete strangers would come up to me, shake my hand and thank me for what I had done.)

'However, as I've learned in the meantime, mostly by helping the readers rout Joseph Nicholas in the pages of HOLIER THAN THOU, it is always better to use sarcasm and satire when dealing with the ridiculous rather than a blunt hatchet. Were Malzberg only in the second or third year of building up to deciding to quit science fiction today, I would certainly respond in a more entertaining fashion.

'Charles Saunders' review, THE INDIANS WON, caused me to stop and think about why the Indians didn't win. The answer is simple: True primitives never do. Even in ancient Roman times, primitives always lost. Right at the very end, as Stilicho and Alaric were squaring off, there was an invasion of real barbarians. This caused a brief interruption, while the Romans slaughtered them and then hostilities resumed. The guys who won (the Germans) were not primitive at all. They were the full military equals of the Romans. In fact when they were working for the Empire, they were the best troops the Romans had.

'Primitives always lose against civilized peoples because civilization can support a much higher population, and because the civilized people have resources and organiza-

tion which the primitives can never hope to match. Once the Spanish were established in the Americas, and the Indians failed to wipe out the Jamestown and Massachusetts Bay settlements, they never had a chance. They were rapidly outnumbered by sheer population. They could not field large armies. They failed to comprehend "civilized" concepts of warfare and often fought for personal glory, or as a sport, rather than strictly to win. They wholly lacked the concept of an industrial base, which meant they could never manufacture weapons. A gun implies a mining industry, a metal industry, factories, transportation systems. Indians apparently did not understand support technology, and while they were able to use the end-result of a long process (i.e. the rifle), they could not duplicate the process.

'They also did not understand the white man's need for supplies, transportation, and communication. If they had, they might have spent their time more fruitfully tearing up railroad tracks and cutting telegraph wires. The analogy to modern guerilla warfare is inadequate. The modern guerilla is not a primitive, and knows exactly what to go for.

'Courage isn't enough, nor is even a sudden understanding of how the civilized folk do it. Apparently the Zulus of South Africa got some idea of European military organization, and were able to produce large armies. They also had a couple leaders of genius. They did everything humanly possible to defend their liberty, but it was not enough. The British had the advantage of hundreds of years of industrial growth and made short work of them. Someone wrote a book about this process recently. It's called THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE MACHINE GUN.

'Actually, all of this is science-fictional. It's what Wells was writing about in THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. From the viewpoint of the Indians or the Zulus, there was an invasion from Mars. Strangers, not previously even known to exist, suddenly appeared in overwhelming numbers, equipped with unbeatable weapons and tactics which were produced by incomprehensible means. Given a long enough period of contact without conquest, the intended victims might have become a match for the invaders, but of course, that was not allowed to happen.

'Rich Brown argues convincingly about FRIDAY. He has seen things I overlooked in the emotional rush at the end of the story. But I must admit, I don't find the mere fact that the Realm hired a top a-

gent to be implausible. If they were expecting trouble, they would want to have the prize delivered by someone who is very, very good at delivering things, no matter what the opposition.

'What I don't find convincing at the end, aside from all the conveniences, is Friday's attitude toward one of her former rapists. She discovers one of the guys who participated in the gang-bang, and is only momentarily hostile. When he tells her he didn't approve of or take part in the subsequent torture, she forgives him. He still did rape her. He even tells her that he did it, not because it was his job, but because he "wanted to." I suppose this is a Gorean-type compliment. This is what I mean by her being unconvincingly blase' about the whole matter. I cannot believe a woman would react like that. Not only did she fail to ring his neck, she didn't even attempt to castrate him with the nearest rusty spoon. A few pages later she marries him.

'This is a much more shrieking implausibility than any logic lapse. It's the most serious flaw in the book. I should have brought it out more in my review.

'It think FRIDAY does have a plot in the mainstream sense. It is the story of Friday's self-discovery and her transformation from a top-secret courier to a housewife. It even works in traditional problem-solving terms. Her problem is finding a new life for herself when her old one comes apart, as the organization she works for disintegrates. The resolution comes when she does.

'Oh, one other thing. I know what happened to the missing AGAIN DANGEROUS VISIONS author, Burt K. Filer. Or some of it, anyway. Filer, as you may recall, had a number of modestly good stories in Fred Pohl's magazines in the late 60s in addition to the one he sold to Harlan. Then he disappeared. Well, it so happened that about 1975 or so, as I was coming back to Philadelphia from a convention with a carload of people, we picked up a hitchhiker. The subject of SF came up. This guy just happened to have known an SF writer: Burt K. Filer.

'I don't believe we were being put on, because this hitchhiker was not a fan, and had no idea that Filer was "missing." Now this was some years ago, and I may have forgotten some details, but the gist of the story was that Filer had started writing while in school, but later settled into a job (engineering, I think), and gotten married at the age of 23, moved and

thus found his life sufficiently filled with other things that he no longer had the time nor inclination to write. The hitchhiker (whose name I forgot) was glad that somebody remembered Filer, but did not know where he was. A very vague and unsatisfactory story. Some detective I would make.'

LETTER FROM ED ROM
2600 1/2 Calihan Avenue
Bemidji, MN 56601
November 11, 1982

'I took Darrell Schweitzer's advice and sent a letter to AMAZING. They probably still won't print it, though, because of the subject matter. Which brings me to the real reason for this LoC: I'm referring to a story in the September, 1982 AMAZING (which I believe was the last Mavor-edited issue) entitled "Flyer" by one John Steakley, which I believe is a nom de plume.

'This is one of the strangest, most bizarre stories I have ever read, and Steakley made it that way on purpose. It is a story on two levels. The surface level is about a young man who can fly without mechanical aid (synchronicity: the song "Greatest American Hero" is playing on the radio just now). The level underneath is about the young man learning he is gay, coming out of the closet, hustling and finally reconciling himself to his gayness. If you read the story with this second level in mind, it becomes more and more obvious.

'Flying is so ecstatic that Felix can't bear to hold himself down to a 9-5 routine job. He is getting rather hungry and meets the old man, Ryan, who has seen him flying from afar. Ryan wants Felix to take him up flying. Felix bargains with him for food in

a mercenary way and takes him up. An excerpt from this sequence:

"Felix shifted his cargo slightly to keep his arms from cramping and brushed against buttocks which were quite literally skin and bones. Surrounded by his bounty, Ryan had the physique of a concentration camp victim. Felix started to ask, thought better of it. Ryan coughed nervously, unnecessarily, his only hint of a plea. Felix decided then to give him all of it, 'Hang on, old man!' he shouted gaily, and turned it on."

'Double entendre, all the way through. The whole story is like that. His next rich mark is named Chatham:

"Chatham, the Chief Domestic Advisor, was right on time. He was also a pig. He came stumbling out through the casino doors onto the sidewalk wearing a custard yellow suit (side pockets bulging with chips) and a black satin shirt open to the waist. He had a sort of medallion thing around his neck that swung loosely amid great black tufts of chest hair. In his left hand was a half-finished martini. Felix, watching from the shadows of the wharf, sighed."

'Felix meets his old girlfriend and lets her know that she no longer has any sexual power over him. The story goes on in this vein.

'I advise you to get a copy of the September AMAZING and read this story. It's real art in the sense that it took great skill to put together, and also in the sense that it is rather tasteless.



Good art is seldom tasteful, because the arbiters of taste are as dull and limited as the norm of society.

'As a person who has made a living writing pornographic novels, you ought to appreciate this story. Unless you are "John Steakley!"

'The Brad W. Foster cover is just great. What an artist!'

((I read the story, and it does seem to have the hidden content you perceive. And I suspect the story was accepted and published partly for that content---to jolt the readership of AMAZING and reward a writer willing to take a chance on putting that much work into a story with low marketability prospects.

((No, I'm not Steakley. And I'm not gay. The story has no emotional special interest for me even though I admire the skill of the writer in places.))

LETTER FROM ARNOLD M FENNER
8435 Carter
Overland Park, KS 66212
November 9, 1982

'Wh-what? Wait a minute! A SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW with a wrap-around cover illo? It's unheard of! Shameless! No ad for back issues and subs on the backcover?! I ... I ...

'I like it. When you gonna do it again, Mr. Geis, sir? Naturally you've got it down pat after all this time so of course #45 is another excellent issue. It would be surprising if it wasn't.

'Charles Platt's profile of Keith Laumer was amusing. I somehow have this image of Laumer serving in a diplomatic capacity at the SALT talks, waving his sword and cane simultaneously over a Russian counterpart's head screaming, "MOTHERFUCKING ASS HOLES! FUCKING LAY OFF! NAARGHHH!"

'My. My, my, my. Elton sure did raise a few hackles, didn't he? Several years ago I was sitting on a panel at ArchCon with Ed Bryant, Ken Keller and Leah Couch --- one of the topics of discussion was "Has Fantasy Become the Tail that Wags the Dog." Both the fantasy and SF camps were heard from with the arguments sounding pretty much like your latest lettercolumn and Elton's article(s). Basically all that was decided was that (A) covers and blurbs are misleading 90% of the time, and that (B) one person's reading treasure is another person's garbage.

'It did sound like Elton was judging a lot of fantasy books by their covers and ad copy rather than by their actual content. God knows that jillions of books have had inappropriate covers and ad campaigns and that jillions more will suffer similar fates in the future. Barbarians wind up on books without barbarians just as often as spaceships turn up on books without spaceships.

'I think the only logical thing to do is to look at the fantasy field in general and either buy and enjoy what you like or shrug and look for things you do. To attack either fantasy or science fiction on the basis of its (their) worst examples while ignoring the high points seems a bit silly. Better to sharpen the sword for the various marketing advisers

'While I agree with Darrell Schweitzer that the Mike Whelan cover for AMAZING is especially nice, I think he's out of line when he says SF paintings on F&SF magazines have become, "... a novelty since the Idiot took over the covers at Davis, and F&SF has gone mostly to first-year art student imitations of Magritte."

'Again this boils down to a matter of taste, but I think ASIMOV'S has had some exceptional covers this year, covers that any professional magazine would be proud of. Perry Realo's cover for March 15th and Peter Loyd's for June come instantly to mind. If either of these don't make it into the Illustrators Show or the C.A. competition this year I'll be very surprised.

'Also F&SF has had some beautiful covers over the past couple of years. I would hardly call the works by Gahan Wilson or Barclay Shaw or Carl Lundgren or David Mattingly (or others that could be easily named) "first-year art student imitations of Magritte."



'Of course, the Scithers' ASIMOV'S had some nice covers -- they had some pretty bad ones, too. It would be just as irrational for me to condemn George's ability as an art director based on that hand-

ful of covers as it is for Darrell to put down the present ASIMOV'S and F&SF with such a cavalier statement.

'You know, in light of all the raised hackles in this issue and last, I can't help but remind you of those immortal words spoken by Lloyd Bridges in the movie AIR-PLANE: "Loy! I sure picked the wrong day to give up sniffing glue!"

'Take care, Richard.'

((As you know, wrap-around covers are difficult to use and I doubt I'll indulge again. I am instead using the backcover for a display of large art pieces I rarely have room for inside. I must work down this huge artfile!))

CARD FROM R. REGINALD
THE BORGO PRESS
POB 2845
San Bernardino, CA 92406
November 18, 1982

'Charles Saunder's review of Martin Smith's THE INDIANS WON, in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45, states that this is Smith's unpublished first novel. Actually, the book was published by Belmont in 1970.'

CARD FROM ROBERT BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046
November 9, 1982

'Yes, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45 is another outstanding issue, but upon careful consideration I must say that its best work is contributed by -- Richard E. Geis. Your observation that all fiction is fantasy is something I've been waiting for someone to say, and in this context, much of the controversy takes on an air of quibbling over supernatural concepts vs. technological and/or techno-illogical extrapolations. I also admire your comments on economics -- a branch of fantasy all too frequently neglected. Personally, I'd rank "supply-side economics" right up there with the OZ books. It's really weird, man! Hoping you are the same.'

((It has struck me that in my quarterly economics commentary I am often indulging in a form of non-fiction science fiction. In that event the material is appropriate for SFR.

(In fact, considering the relationship to truth and reality of most non-fiction material (like newspaper stories), we could extend "all fiction is fantasy" to "All writing is fantasy!" All reviews, all diaries, all essays, all ... Well, maybe cookbooks and instruction manuals aren't fantasy. On the other hand....)

CARD FROM JOHN HARLLEE
SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MSGR.
POB 1245, Florence, SC 29503
November, 1982

'I don't think Jules Verne deserves all that much credit for "predicting the submarine;" after all, the first rudimentary version was used by the U.S. Navy in the Revolution (it was named the Turtle, and it attacked a British warship in N.Y. harbor) and by Verne's time people like the Confederate Navy were actually building subs. What he did was predict the development into the 20th Century ships with living accommodations and the ability to stay submerged for weeks, and tell a really good tale in the process.'

LETTER FROM ALAN DEAN FOSTER
THRANX, INC.
4001 Pleasant Valley Drive
Prescott, AZ 86301
8 November 1982

'Darrell Schweitzer's comments in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45 on FRIDAY summed up the book quite well. It's strange to see two Heinleins at war with themselves. Perhaps the end result will be a whole writer greater than the sum of his parts.

'I found it gratifying that one of our grand masters should be the one to work up so detailed a description of an ununited states, much less a plausible description. That sort of thing's supposed to be the province of the young turks. Now what REH needs to do is edit down his sequences of domestic dialogue. But at least plot has returned to his storytelling. In fact, storytelling has returned to his storytelling, save for an anti-climactic ending.

'Interesting sidenote: In comparing FRIDAY to his last novels, he seems to have settled on substituting descriptions of meals for descriptions of sex. Intercourse or main course, it's still unnecessary padding. FRIDAY's the only

book I can think of where the reader's interest in the characters and plot is broken by menu readings.

'As to the comments of Darrell and others concerning Heinlein's females, their thoughts and characters, I'd very much like to hear from Virginia Heinlein on the subject.'

LETTER FROM J.E. POURNELLE
J.E. POURNELLE AND ASSOCIATES
12051 Laurel Terrace Drive
Studio City, CA 91604
November 6, 1982

'You were, of course, right on the mark in your notes to the letter by Steve Perram in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45. OATH OF FEALTY managed to reach #8 on the best-seller list and stay better than 20 for several weeks; it probably wouldn't have done that as a Timescape book.

'It will become a Timescape book in another year or so; books do better in backlist as science fiction than they do as mainstream. It's a complicated world ...

'It's as well that OATH sold a lot of copies, since it was never nominated for any awards. That may be because it wasn't good enough, although most reviewers don't seem to have felt that way; more likely it is because it was published in hardback (as a Timescape, incidentally) in Fall.

'Fall is the proper time for hardback publication if you want to sell books; but it's plain lousy if you're interested in Hugos, since Fall publication puts the paperback out just after the nominations are over. Other things being equal, I'd suppose you'd have the best chance at a Hugo if the paperback came out in March or so, meaning that the hardback should have come out in the previous June at the latest. I wish someone would think of a way to run the Hugo such that authors don't have to choose between sales and a reasonable chance at awards.

'Ah, well.'

((OATH failed to win an award, in my view, because of its content, not for lack of writing quality. The award nominators and voters are largely young, optimistic, liberal, anti-authoritarian. You and Larry presented them with a carload of mixed emotions when you mixed in

unpalatable social truths and killed a college-aged youth engaged in a prank--an anti-authoritarian (in his eyes) prank. You punished stupidity, unforgivable in our present-day culture.

((In brief, your audience does not vote in the Hugo or Nebula awards process.))

LETTER FROM RICH BROWN
1632 19th Street, NW, #2
Washington D.C. 20009
November 16, 1982

'I was one of those fans at the Chicon business session who voted on that change to the fanzine Hugos. But I lost. I voted and urged others to vote for the elimination of the fan awards; that aside, I think the worst of the alternatives offered was eventually what was chosen. (The only other alternative I really thought worthy of consideration was one put forward unofficially by Andy Porter -- to have the fan Hugos made of plutonium of slightly less than critical mass ...)

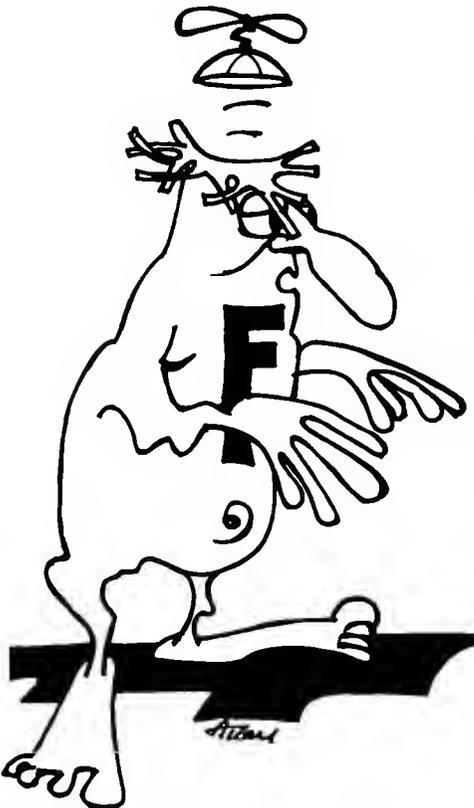
'If the alternative accepted at Chicon is ratified at Constellation, I seriously doubt SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW or LOCUS will ever win another Hugo -- ar at least that they or STARSHIP or THRUST will ever win a "Best Semi-Prozine" Hugo.

'Any of you could, as you point out here, get back into the competition by letting your circulation slide and making a few minor changes to the way you do things. But it is more likely that the Best Semi-Prozine Hugo will go to something like UNEARTH or WHISPERS or FANTASY BOOK or maybe even STARLOG ... and I really have to wonder if that is what those who proposed this change had in mind. And if so, why?

'I'm sure you're quite aware, Dick, how frequently I've said that SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and LOCUS are not "my kind" of fanzine -- but I hope I do not need to explain that while my primary fannish interest lies in participating in what is largely another kind of fanzine (of which PSYCHOTIC was a worthy example), it does not follow that I am incapable of appreciating SFR or LOCUS or THRUST or STARSHIP for what they are. And "what they are" are fanzines -- whether you or Charlie Brown or Andy Porter or Doug Fratz make a few bucks on them or not. I don't believe the same can be said for UNEARTH, FANTASY BOOK or STARLOG.

'But all right. You and Charlie -- blast your hides, you filthy rotten swine! -- have won most of the fanzine Hugos for the past decade or so, with Andy and Doug standing in the wings should either of you stumble. No chance, in that situation for a low circulation high-quality fanzine to win the award, no matter how good it might be, against the four of you -- since the "low-circulation" cancels out the "high-quality." The kind of fanzine which I like best tends to be one which is published as a hobby and seldom has a circulation over 2-300, of which perhaps 40 or 50 are overseas fan. Maybe half the remaining number would be in a position in any particular year to vote on the fanzine Hugos -- and probably some of those would think that some other fanzine with a 2-300 circulation deserves the award. Which means, if any of these kinds of fanzines should get 100 votes, and more than 1/10th of SFR's readers also vote (the majority of whom have never seen these other kinds of fanzines), that low-circulation high-quality fanzine gets swamped.

'So what hell -- let's just penalize you and Charlie and Andy and Doug because the kind of fanzine you like to publish is more popular than the kind of fanzine I like best. Just push you out of the way and bump you into a category where UNEARTH, WHISPERS, FANTASY



BOOK and STARLOG can do to you what you've been doing to all of us. Uh-huh.

'So now "my" kind of fanzines are going to win the fanzine Hugos, right?

'Wrong.

'It will go to you or Charlie or Doug or Andy if you let your circulation slip, and make a few other minor concessions to fit in the new "fanzine" category. If it is simply not worth that kind of bother to any of the four of you, it will go to some low-grade imitation SFR, LOCUS, THRUST or STARSHIP that does not have quite the same circulation but which otherwise falls within this new "fanzine" definition.

'Why?

'Because no one who is publishing one of those high-quality hobby fanzines is at all interested in doing the extra work (which can only make the hobby tedious) or paying the extra expense of building a 200-circulation fanzine into a circulation of 500 or 600 or 700 where they might stand a chance under this new scheme. In many cases, the expense of publishing these fanzines is entirely or largely borne directly by the editor -- and since most of these editors are more interested in receiving response than trying to make a profit, this would require doubling or trebling the expense of their hobby. Either that, or taking on a lot of silent subscribers, who would increase the amount of work necessary but would not increase the pleasure of publishing that fanzine to any appreciable degree.

'On the other hand, there are a number of imitation SFRs, LOCUSES, THRUSTS and STARSHIPS, the editors of which are trying to do precisely what you, Charlie, Doug and Andy are already doing -- providing a service to a large number of fans who are not involved in fanzine fandom, while building a subscription circulation so the entire expense of publishing does not fall on the editor.

'Comparing SFR to PSYCHOTIC or LOCUS to FILE 770 or THRUST to BOONFARK, etc., is like comparing apples and oranges. It is at least arguable that PSYCHOTIC was "better" than SFR -- I have my opinion on that, but I admit it's a matter of tastes and tastes are just opinion and therefore arguable. Since these are different kinds of fanzines, before judging one to be superior to another, it is necessary to make an assumption that one kind

of fanzine is superior to another. (I do make such assumptions, of course. But it's only my opinion.)

'Yet what is not arguable, I think, is that SFR and LOCUS and THRUST and STARSHIP are the best fanzines of their kind -- and therefore superior to their lower-grade imitators. In comparing similar fanzines, published with similar goals and for similar reasons and given that all of the fanzines in this particular category are actively seeking subscribers, I think circulation can certainly be used to at least partially gauge their quality. And I think it is obvious that it will be these imitation SFRs, LOCUSES, THRUSTS and STARSHIPS, which aren't quite as good because they only have a circulation of 500 or 600 or so, which will stand the greatest chance of winning a fanzine Hugo if this proposal is ratified. Those high-quality low-circulation just-because-they're-fun-to-do fanzines will still not be in the running -- even though the people who brought these proposals to Chicon were intent on giving these fanzines "a chance."

'I frankly don't know what all the fuss is about. Most of these hobby editors would prefer to win a fan poll in which the voters were clearly their peers -- other people actively involved in fanzine fandom. I know I would. If I got one of those little rockets, I'm afraid my reaction would be something like, "Yeah, well, it's nice, I suppose. I guess this means my fanzine is every bit as good as FANTASY TIMES."

'(Perhaps, for those who've not been around fandom for the past 20 years or so, I should point out that FANTASY TIMES, one of the earliest Hugo-winners, was a fanzine somewhat like LOCUS, in the sense that it presented news about the SF field. Nonetheless, F-T would, unlike LOCUS, have to rank as one of the most quasi-literate fanzines of all time.)

'I don't believe I would ever get a chance to say that -- it could only have happened (even under the plan proposed at Chicon) as a result of some kind of fluke -- an exceptionally low turnout of voters, or maybe the fanzines with the 700-800 circulation cancelling each other out, or something like that. And where's the egoboo, the sense of having Accomplished Something, in that?

'I don't deny that the people who put all these alternative proposals forward should be credited with anything but good (or at least kindly) motives. Yeah, sure, it would be really nice if a fanzine

like, say, BOONFARK or TAPPEN or IZZARD were to win an award because of the excellence of their efforts. (This presumes, I think mistakenly, that the Hugos are awarded for quality rather than popularity. Or rather, in the belief that quality will win over popularity, which is not quite the same thing.) But at the same time I think the people who publish BOONFARK and TAPPEN and IZZARD should be credited with a little pride and at least some intelligence -- the award is not going to mean diddly-squat, to them or anyone else, if it has been "won" simply because the rules have been "rigged" just for that purpose. These editors win legitimate praise from their readers, and I think it is an insult to the intelligence of these editors to try to set things up so they might receive what must ultimately be seen as counterfeit coin.

'The real problem, you see, is that the Hugo is not a "peer" award, as is the Nebula -- it's the award of the world science fiction convention. The intent of all these proposals to redefine the fanzine in the Hugo category is clearly to make the vast majority of worldcon attendees decide they are unqualified to vote -- leaving the 400 or 500 or so who are qualified to make that judgment.

'I don't believe the proposal can possibly accomplish that intent, since I think people will vote whether they meet "my" (or anyone else's) criteria for being qualified or not -- and good on them, I might add.

'But even if it did succeed in accomplishing that intent, I cannot help but wonder how the recipient of the award could avoid the realization that the fanzine Hugo would then be a hollow cheat. It would, if successful, only be a way to "rig" things so 500 people could give an award in the name of 5000 or more. The 500 who voted for the award would know this. The 4500 who refrained from voting would know this. The recipient of the award would also know this. Who would be fooled?

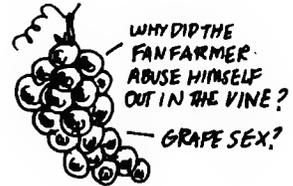
'As I said at the outset, I really think the fan awards should be abolished. When world conventions only drew 500-800 people, there was always a slight chance that these fan Hugos could be peer awards -- at that time, a significant portion of the attendees would also have had some involvement in fanzine fandom or at least some part of it. There's really no chance of that sort of thing happening when worldcon attendance is averaging 5-10,000 -- and rising

year by year. I think the fanzine Hugos should be abolished because there's no chance that that number of people can make a quality judgment, given the fact that a large number of excellent fanzines are published in a circulation of only a few hundred.

'On the other hand, if a significant number of people at the worldcon disagree with me, I think the least we can do is acknowledge that the fanzine awards are for popularity with perhaps some judgment made on the relative quality of the most popular fanzines. And in that event, I see no good reason why SFR, LOCUS, THRUST or STARSHIP should be penalized for their success.

((For those who entered fandom late, or don't care, PSYCHOTIC was my fanzine in the middle-late Fifties and late Sixties. Yes, I am ancient.

((I'll take my chances against WHISPERS, UNEARTH, and FANTASY BOOK. STARLOG...doesn't it have an over-10,000 circulation? I expect LOCUS to continue to win the Best Fanzine or Best Semi-Pro-zine award, by the way. And I expect SFR to become more and more a personalzine and to have a much lower circulation. It might---in a few years---qualify as a real, genuine fanzine again. Mostly because I am getting more and more unwilling to put so much time into it. Its present incarnation is not long for this world. Ghod knows I'll always publish something, but I'm less and less satisfied with this mix.))



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LETTER FROM RICH BROWN
1632 19th Street, NW, #2
Washington, DC 20009
December 10, 1982

'Stopped over at Ted White's the other evening and he beat me mightily about the head and shoulders and called me all kinds of names. Well, no, it was nothing quite that bad -- it just seems that way in retrospect. The subject which led to this abuse was the "nonsense" in my review of FRI-DAY in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW which tied menstruation to ovulation. A woman who has her tubes tied (tubal ligation, I believe it's called) would not ovulate but would continue to menstruate, and it would not only be possible but sensible to remove one of her ova (if that's in fact what was supposed to have happened to Friday) for the purpose of fertilizing it without sterilizing her, i.e., untying her tubes. No doubt, the sophisticated readership of SFR has pointed this out. No doubt they will wish to beat me mightily about the head and shoulders and call me all kinds of names.

'As someone who has frequently made a fool of himself, I make use of the tried-and-true method of changing the subject. Hey, what do you think about the price of rice in China? Don't you think it depends upon the value of the yen? Gotten any lately? Will the friction-type belt-buckle be the thing of the future?'

((Relax; nobody has written about your blunder. To answer your questions: I have no opinion. No. Yes. No.))

LETTER FROM BRUCE GILLESPIE
GPO Box 5195AA
Melbourne, Victoria 3001
Australia
4 December 1982

'My one achievement for 1982 -- and I hope you can announce this sometime, somewhere -- had been, at last, to publish S F COMMENTARY REPRINT EDITION: FIRST YEAR 1969, which includes the first eight issues of SFC, typeset, printed, indexed, with a new introduction by me. 200 numbered copies only. More than 200,000 words. Photos of people as they were in 1969. Authors include Geis, Aldiss, Lem, Dick, Brunner, Delany, Turner, Foyster, Harding, Bangsund, Broderick, etc. \$40 a copy (which would be the cost of photocopying the originals). US cheques acceptable -- send to "Bruce Gillespie".'

LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS
Box 25771
Albuquerque, NM 87125
November 22, 1982

'Forget about the three Rs -- here's some stuff on the three Ls.

'There were two references to libertarianism in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45 that seemed to call for comment. In the Keith Laumer profile, Laumer screams that libertarianism is anarchy, which is close enough, but jumps to the common conclusion that anarchy would mean that the "biggest assholes" would take over, and that suddenly we'd be without TV, gas and groceries. But that's simpleminded bullshit because anarcho-libertarianism is not likely to happen overnight -- if it does happen it's liable to be a gradual evolution, a racial maturation that will make governments, as well as those biggies, wither away like the hemorrhoids they are.

'The other reference to libertarianism was in Darrell Schweitzer's review of Kornbluth's THE SYNDIC, where Schweitzer quotes Frederik Pohl as saying that SYNDIC has become a "sacred tract" to libertarians. Well, maybe some libertarians somewhere, but I suspect that most people who identify with the label simply recognize the libertarian spirit in THE SYNDIC and leave sacred tracts to someone else. It should be clearly noted that libertarians are not necessarily connected in any way with the "Libertarian Party" (a contradiction in terms if ever there was one).

'All of which leads up to the following plug for the Libertarian Futurist Society which was organized last spring by Michael Grossberg (Box 14181, Austin, TX, 78761) to revive the Prometheus award for best libertarian SF novel. The first Prometheus went to WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS by F. Paul Wilson in 1979, and then the award was suspended until Grossberg and others started the LFS to carry on the tradition. The Second Prometheus (a Hayek Half gold coin) was awarded the THE PROBABILITY BROACH by L. Neil Smith at the 1982 Worldcon, and it looks like the award will be with us for a good long time to come. There will be a quarterly LFS Newsletter, PROMETHEUS, but at this writing I haven't seen the first issue and the editorship has already changed, so anyone interested should contact Grossberg until further notice.

'L-2 is limericks. The fates and the muses conspired to make me guest editor of the Mensa LIMERICK SIG NEWSLETTER for November, 1982 and the result was PLANET OF THE LIMERICKS, a collection of 99 limericks, with original contributions by Isaac Asimov, Ruth Berman, Robert Bloch, Steve Eng, Don Maker, Rod Walker, Gene Wolfe and others, with reprints from ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE, Asimov, Poul Anderson, S. Dale, M.M. Moamrath and such classic sources as Legman's THE LIMERICK, Baring-Gould's THE LURE OF THE LIMERICK, Crist's PLAYBOY'S BOOK OF LIMERICKS and many others. PLANET OF THE LIMERICKS turned out so well that I'm now looking for a paperback publisher for an expanded version which would include some of the classics that were left out and as much new material as possible.

'SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW readers can assist in this foolhardy venture by bringing my attention to SF/fantasy limericks I might have missed. In particular I'm in need of two collections of SF limericks listed in the Limerick SIG's semiannual limerick bibliography. These are George Barr's SF AND FANTASY LIMERICK ILLUMINATED (Philadelphia, 1968) and Roy Lavender's LOST LIMERICKS AND BAR ROOM BALLADS (Cincinnati: World SF Convention, 1949, reprinted Reynoldsburg, OH, 1957). By the time this letter is printed I may well have the Barr collection in hand, but the Lavender one may be harder to track down. If someone out there has a copy of Lavender (or any other such critter) I'd appreciate hearing from them.

'L No. 3 is that lefthanded business that I've mentioned in some earlier issues of SF REVIEW. Little new to repeat except that Shevek in LeGuin's THE DISPOSSESS-ED was lefthanded and that I heard from Rick Kennett of Coburg, Victoria, Australia, who says he is left-oriented in everything except his hands. Is LeGuin lefthanded, or just leftwing? Australian slang for a leftie is Molly Dooka in case anyone is interested.

L-4 and L-5 will have to wait for future developments.'

((Here's a limerick I just composed: Consider a weird writer named Geis Whose habits were not very nice. When not picking his nose He was screwing a hose, Not to mention his primary vice.))

For what it's worth, I'm lefthanded, too.))

LETTER FROM JEAN WEBER
c/o CSIRO, POB 1800
Canberra City, ACT
Australia 2601
November 19, 1982

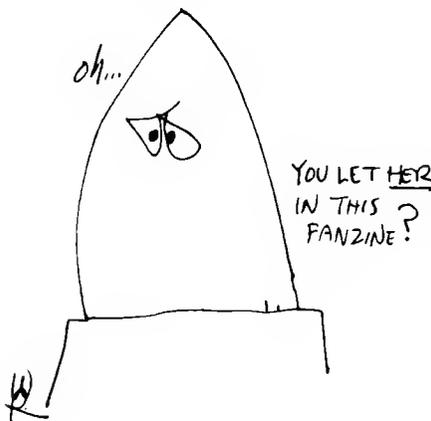
'I found it particularly amusing to compare the comments on fantasy by Darrell Schweitzer and Elton Elliott in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45. Elton, like several others I've read in the last year or so, seems very distressed, angry and even offended that his narrowly-defined version of science fiction appears to be less popular than other forms (including fantasy). He asks, "What caused this, what will the results be, and what can be done about it."

'As far as I'm concerned, it's a total non-issue. If Elton does not want to call the stuff he does not like by the name of "science fiction", fair enough. Let him define his terms however he prefers. The stuff will still be written and will still be popular. Why should it matter in the least? The ending of his article suggests that he may consider insult and ridicule a way to influence other readers' tastes. Fortunately, few people are likely to care about his opinion.

'Darrell, on the other hand, suggests positive reasons why fantasy appeals to people (rather than suggesting it's merely a juvenile trait to be outgrown) -- and he suggests that many of those elements could be incorporated into science fiction -- without detriment to SF.

'My personal experience suggests that Darrell's right. I read SF through the 50s but virtually quit in the mid-60s, because most of what I read didn't satisfy me. Too many gadgets and not enough characterization -- or at least few women to whom I could relate. Along about 1975 (when I discovered fandom at Aussiecon), I started reading SF again, and found numerous authors writing things that I enjoyed. Soon I discovered that much of what I liked was classified as "fantasy" (or sometimes "science fantasy"), which surprised me. I'd always looked down on fantasy as "fairy tales," as Elton appears to do -- till I discovered that there's a lot more to it than that. Now I realize how absurd labelling is -- there's good writing and poor writing, triviality and meaning (or importance) in all "labels," and what appeals to one person is loathed by another. Why worry? (Perhaps snobdom appeals to Elton?) As long as there's some of what he likes being published, why should

it matter that a lot of what he doesn't like is also being published? Publishers have to make a profit, after all.



LETTER FROM MARK H. CAMPOS
5435 Pearl Drive
Sun Valley, NV 89431
December 8, 1982

'On the subject of Phillip K. Dick, rest him: I went to college (Willamette, Salem, Oregon, 1981) with a girl named Nicole Thibodeaux. Pretty girl, Hawaiian. Anyway, long after I'd lost touch with her, someone who understands my fondness for the writing of Mr. Dick handed me a copy of THE SIMULACRA, written in 1963, in which the power behind the Presidency is a woman named Nicole Thibodeaux. Same name, same spelling. This is obviously not a coincidence; head games are (or were) being played.



'I am reminded of this by the following: I finally caught the movie NIGHT SHIFT this evening, and while reading the titles (something I always do), I noticed the name "Hans Beimler" listed as Assistant to the Director or Second Unit Director or something like that. Hans Beimler is also the Commissar in the song sung by Herb Asher in Mr. Dick's last novel, THE DIVINE INVASION. Something is happening here, and I don't know what it is.'

LETTER FROM ELTON T. ELLIOTT
1899 Weissner Drive, NE
Salem, OR 97303

'Dick, I had a big, flashy response prepared for those benighted

few who disagreed with my article, but it didn't have the right feel so I deep-sixed it. I won't change their opinions by whatever I say and they won't change mine by further rejoinders, so I'll just reserve my commentary for "Raising Hackles" and leave the letter column for unrelated observations.

'To all those who wrote in to me personally and expressed regret over the end of the news column, thank you. It was time, I felt, to go on to new areas. I was pretty burned out on news. Besides, most of the recent news was too depressing. At Berkley they answer the phones, "Berkley/Jove/Ace/Playboy." I don't care to report on mergers; the shrinkage of market that they represent is to me very frightening, not only economically but also politically. The thought of the future of paperback publishing ten years down the road being only 3 publishers with a half dozen imprints each is disquieting. Such concentration of publishing in a democracy could change the political nature of our country in ways none of us would like.

'Speaking of political realities that none of us like: Poul Anderson was quite correct in his letter that would-be secret rulers of the world are probably not smart enough to succeed. But that does not mean that they wouldn't try. In fact, if intelligent people know that domination of the world is impossible, it makes sense that only stupid people would try. In fact, the 1/2-billion dollars that the "brains" running the Chase Manhattan Bank have lost in the past year show me that they possess the intellectual capacity to try.

'With what we know of human nature, the idea that nobody would attempt to secretly dominate the planet through economic or political means, I find harder to believe than the fact that somebody would try. It's not paranoia, it's just plain common sense.'

((Those ... 'benighted few' you mention who oppose your arguments in re fantasy vs. science fiction are named Legion; I've had to pick the opposition letters printed in this issue from among dozens. There's a message embedded in these responses.

((The shift of the publishing industry to the automobile industry model--a Big Six (one might say) who issue books under a variety of imprints the way GM, Ford and Chrysler produce cars from various divisions and sub-divisions---is both frightening and heartening: the dinosaur syndrome allows small, independant houses to flourish in the areas the biggies won't or can't bother with.))

SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

URANUS #3

Edited and published by Roger Dutcher,
1537 Washburn,
Beloit, WI 53511

A 28-page offset, letter-size sf poetry magazine full of typical free verse, a couple haikus that actually rhyme, and good intentions.

If this sort of thing is your bag, fine. Make \$1.50 checks to Roger Dutcher.

On another matter, Roger sent along (with URANUS #3) a photocopy of a page from COLLECTIBLE BOOKS: SOME NEW PATHS. It is from Peter B. Howard's article, "American Fiction Since 1960." There is a paragraph that reads:

"As should be abundantly clear by now, first editions are often paperbacks. In two and one-half years Essex House in Los Angeles published 41 paperback originals by collectible authors like Charles Bukowski, Kirby Doyle, Philip Jose Farmer, and David Meltzer, and by some very obscure authors like Richard Geis. The editions ranged from 15,000 to 30,000 copies."

Ah, fame....

REALITY INSPECTOR By John Caris
Westgate House \$3.95
1716 Ocean Av., Suite 75
San Francisco, CA 94112

John Ocean is called in to debug the Federal Reserve's prime computer which keeps mis-reporting weekly M-1 figures, allowing person or persons unknown to profit greatly in the financial markets.

Mundane...but Ocean is able to enter other realities and by following clues, by divining meanings from warnings given him, by alliance with metaphysical, psychic, psi-talented friends---one of whom is in a match for the World Chess Championship---he solves the problem of an impossible-to-find recurring computer program in ZAC (the Fed. computer).

This is an extraordinary novel which seems full of messages, satires, portents and warnings given the reader about life, our civilization, our very humanness. The core is a series of championship chess games (actually played by past masters) which influence the story and [John Caris hopes] the reader.

If you are into chess and/or other levels of Reality, this novel is worth experiencing. It's more than worth the price.



THE LONE WOLF RIDES AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN....

....in George Kochell's three mini-comic booklets. Lone Wolf is action satire on war, escapism, and Herbert Hoover. Good cartooning, but short.

LONE WOLF #1, limited edition, signed and numbered by the artist. \$1.00 postpaid. (16pp)

LONE WOLF #2 is 50¢

TOO TENSE TOONS #1 is 50¢.

All three---\$1.75.

George Kochell

5432 Main, #4

E. Petersburg, PA 17520

George also writes that the illo in SFR #44 I credited to Koszowski, p. 12, is his.

I have too many "K" artists. Somebody change your name! From now on everybody sign your full name on everything. Your full last name, anyway. At least the first four letters of your last name?

DARK AGE--A Collection of Fantasy Art. \$3.95 + 55¢ postage
Dark Age Productions
5539 Jackson
Kansas City, MO 64130

Impressive, intriguing full-color covers by Hank Jankus and Richard Corben enclose this 52-page collection of black & white fantasy art.

Steve Fabian has 13 pages, most of which I've not seen before.

Other artists include Vaughn Bode, Wallace Wood, James Odbert, Phillippe Druillet, Roy Krenkel, Jeff Easley, Berni Wrightson, Nestor Redondo, Richard Corben, John Severin, Jeff Jones, Howard Chaykin, Marcus Boas, Jim Fitzpatrick, George Barr, Clyde Caldwell, Alex Nino, Michael Kaluta and Reed Crandall.

Inside covers are by John Severin and Barry Windsor-Smith.

A very good assemblage, a kind of sampler of styles and subject-matter in fantasy. All of these artists are professionals.

TRANSMUTATIONS---A Book of Personal Alchemy. By Alexei Panshin
Elephant Books
Box 999,
Dublin, PA 18917

Alexei has gone through a kind of young-life crisis precipitated by untimely deaths and an inevitable, "What's it all about, Alfie?" reaction. He's naturally introspective and metaphysical, I think.

There's lots of good stuff in this collection of short pieces, about sf and writing. Some perceptive parables on life and living.

Old crocks like me who have gone through this agonizing and reappraising of the cosmic joke that is life and human consciousness, get a bit impatient with each new writer who thinks no one else has had these same thoughts, and who insist on putting them in print yet again! But wotthehell, archy.

The main thrust of TRANSMUTATIONS is an analysis of sf and a pointing of the way toward a new kind of sf.

Alexei is also into Sufi thought, and that way-of-thinking/perceiving permeates this book.

There are two editions available: Limited 150 copy hardcover edition, numbered and signed, \$20. Or the trade paperback at \$8. Intriguing cover by Barclay Shaw.

THE RHYSLING ANTHOLOGY

The Best Science Fiction Poetry of 1981. Contains the final nominees for the Rhysling Awards.

Published by the Science Fiction Poetry Association,
1722 N. Mariposa Av., #1
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Price: \$1.50

A 42-page booklet, offset, illustrated.

These are all prose poems. Sentences with some meaning (some without) chopped up adroitly and stacked one piece below another, in "stanzas" to form effective flows and stops and starts for the eye & mind.

But not a one of these "poems" rhymes! For me poetry is sound as well as image/thought evocation, and the delight of a clever, skillful marriage of meter and rhyme with content is my measure of fine poetry.

Not everybody is anymore inclined to the discipline of meter and rhyme. That's an added boulder of work and frustration and talent few wish to lift.

COOK By Tom Case
Tom Case,
2 Champion Road, Caversham,
Reading RG4 8EL, ENGLAND

A different time-travel novel:
A modern man is timewarped to 43,000
BC and befriended by a small tribe
of Neanderthals...one of whom
the narrator calls Cook, a one-armed,
one-eyed Neanderthal genius.

The novel is the diary of the
modern man's adventures with this
tribe, and it is a well-written,
very human diary.

There is another story behind
this novel: this is a well-printed
color-cover paperback, and it is
self-published by the author who has
chosen "Tom Case" as a publisher/
author pseudonym. His real name is
Tony Knight. And he has further Tom
Case books in the works.

You can have a copy of Cook by
sending \$3.50 to the above address.

A final word: this is profession-
al writing, and well-researched; you
believe the Neanderthals looked,
acted, and lived this way. And you
care for the poor guy who was myster-
iously transported into their lives.

THE DARKLING By David Kesterton
Arkham House, \$12.95
Sauk City, WI 53583

Far future, warped seasons,
strange mutant/artificial life-
forms, mankind reduced to tribes
living in caves---

A bold, intelligent, psi-tal-
ented young tribesman sets out to
find his missing father and discov-
ers wonders, friends, enemies, and
answers. The answers involve aliens,
a cataclysmic past, an ancient city
and vicious, powermad remnants of
the glory that was.

Standard plot elements, effect-
ive writing, good imagination. Av-
erage adventure characterization.

Very good dust jacket painting
by Raymond Bayless.

EXOTIC WEAPONS---AN ACCESS BOOK
By Michael Hoy 1982
Loompanics Unlimited, POB 1197,
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Everything is pictured and ex-
plained. From all kinds exotic
guns, knives, whips, bolas, sword
canes, hand weapons, shockers,
sonic weapons, tomahawks... over
40 categories of unusual/illegal/
hard-to-get weapons. And, if you
are interested in acquiring them,
dealer addresses.

But for me, and for most writ-
ers, the value of this book is as
reference. You can add touches of
gruesome/detailed authenticity to
fiction by using this book.

No price on the cover---write
Loompanics.

VORTEX #1 \$1.95 November '82
Vortex Magazine
493A Bloor St. W.,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1Y2.

Superior drawing and half-tones
mark this first issue's primary com-
ix story, "In the Lion's Den," which
is far-future sf and peopled with
beautiful, sexy, half-nude, promi-
nently-nippled women. Also---aliens,
robots, the self-indulgent, ruthless
ruler of a thousand solar systems...

"Trip to Glory," the second sto-
ry, is funny/clever/unusual. Credit
Don Marshall.

Editor/Publisher of VORTEX is
William P. Marks. Good job. Not a
bad drawing in the whole mag. Worth
having, though it seems overpriced.

NYCTALOPS #17

Edited and published by Harry O.
Morris, Jr.
502 Elm Street SE,
Albuquerque, NM 87102

A beautifully put-together,
offset, quality-paper fanzine dev-
oted to Lovecraftian horror and
fantasy. Really fine artwork, es-
pecially by J.K. Potter, Brad W.
Foster, Steve Fabian.

Articles about the Cthulhu
mythos and Lovecraft, and fiction
of professional quality, especially
"A Book of Verse" by William Wallace
---exceptionally good writing; com-
mand of words, mood, style.

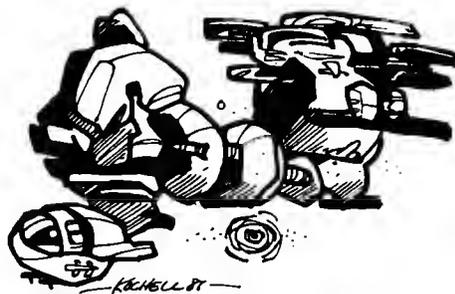
Single copy price is \$3.00.
Worth it.

STROKA PROSPEKT

By Richard A. Lupoff
Illustrated by Ann Mikolowski
Toothpaste Press
Box 546
West Branch, IA 52358

This is a novelet in booklet form
[4-1/2" x 9-1/2"] and is printed
on quality papers. Sewn bindings.
950 copies, of which #1-100 are sign-
ed by the author and artist and bound
in cloth covers. Balance are bound
in Fabriano Ingres wrappers.

There is an Introduction by Thomas
M. Disch.



The story is "non-commercial"
in that it deals with an extensive
Russian socialist mining presence
in the asteroid belt, and one Rus-
sian miner's sexual attraction to
an alien. It's a slice-of-life
story...and not a slice likely to
attract young WASP readers or edit-
ors...in spite of being well-written.

THE SKEPTICAL INQUIRER Fall, 1982
Box 229, Central Park Sta.,
Buffalo, NY 14215

This is the Journal of the Com-
mittee for the Scientific Investiga-
tion of Claims of the Paranormal,
and the featured section in this
issue is "Prophecy and the Selling
of Nostradamus." Three articles
destroy the accuracy and "interpre-
tation" of Nostradamus' obscure and
ambiguous quatrains which through
the centuries since 1566 AD have
been touted as foretelling history.

There is a "News and Comment"
section which covers briefly current
psi, UFO, bigfoot, ghost, clone,
astronomic, etc. claims. Book re-
views, letters, other articles, all
are revealing and no doubt depress-
ing to those who need-to-believe.

Subscriptions: \$16.50 per year.

THE PATCHIN REVIEW #5 \$2.00

Edited by Charles Platt
9 Patchin Place, New York, NY 10011

A fine issue of this controversi-
al and controversy-laden magazine.
A mixture of editorial cynicism and
idealism---Charles wants better
quality writing in sf and fantasy
and derides the hack, the sell-out
and the self-serving lies of edit-
ors, publishers and writers in the
sf/fantasy "family."

The stand-out item in this is-
sue is Charles' profile of Donald
A. Wolheim, head of DAW Books.

SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY BOOK RE-
VIEW #7, September, 1982 \$2.00
Edited by Neil Barron

Published by the Science Fiction
Research Association. Subscrip-
tions (10 for \$15. USA) address:
Elizabeth Cogell, SFRA Treasurer,
Dept. of Humanities, Univ. of Mis-
souri, Rolla, MO 65401. Make checks
and money orders payable to SFRA.

What we have here is academic
values in publishing and editing
shooting themselves in the foot.

The format is your basic hard-
to-read reduced-too-small type in
crowded wall-to-wall single-column
print. No illustrations. No space
between paragraphs.

They give you 60-80 reviews per
issue which they discourage you from
reading. This is called elitist
suicide.

ALIEN CONCLUSIONS

a listing of everything received with some reviews and other information whenever possible.

"The Archives" is back! I hope it helps you readers to have the basic knowledge it supplies. I'm including my own reviews of new books.

The books and other items included will be grouped alphabetically, but not in proper sequence within each letter group.

In order to make room for "The Archives" I've had to drastically cut the "Other Voices" pages. And I'm now saying to the "Other Voices" reviewers: STOP! Do not send any more reviews. With a few exceptions you find it impossible to write short reviews, and I haven't room to publish the longer ones. I'll use up the many reviews I have on hand in subsequent issues.

Readers: myself, Gene DeWeese, and Darrell Schweitzer will be the reviewers for SFR in the near future. (And Paulette, when she has the time, will review new books, too.)

"The Archives" gives readers a run-down on what has been published and available now, plus added information and commentary and review when possible.

It's decided! May Ghod have mercy on my soul...if there is a ghod...if there is a soul...if there is mercy.

MAGAZINES LIVE, MAGAZINES DIE....

MILLEA KENIN HAS PURCHASED EMPIRE writes Kevin O'Donnell, Jr., former publisher. She assumed total control of the magazine Jan.1, 1983.

SEND ALL subscriptions, queries, editorial material, etc. to:

UNIQUE GRAPHICS
1025 S5th Street,
Oakland, CA 94608

ETERNITY SCIENCE FICTION HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED, Stephen Greg notes: 'Refunds on all subscriptions to ETERNITY SF went out several weeks ago & a number have come back as undeliverable. Anyone not receiving a refund should send a change of address to me at P.O. Box 62, Clemson, SC 29633.'



ARCHIVES ANNEX-----

A DIFFERENT DARKNESS

By Gene DeWeese
Playboy, \$2.95

For thousands of years an entity, housed in a strange talisman, has given incredible powers of psychic killing and healing to whomever possessed it.. plus resulting madness.

And the entity's enemies from its home in another dimension have worked to bring it back, using humans as their agents.

Now the struggle reaches crisis again in modern America.

Gene has the skills and talent to make his characters very real and vulnerable, and can mix apparent occult with actual science fiction in high-tensioned suspense/horror stories.

His THE WANTING FACTOR was excellent. This novel I thought a bit slow, especially in the beginning as he introduces his characters and sets the stage. His upcoming SOMETHING ANSWERED is more tightly knit and gripping from the beginning.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #45 Interview with Keith Laumer; "Pulp!" by Algis Budrys; Interview with Terry Carr; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; "Raising Hackles" by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #44 Interview with Anne McCaffrey; "How Things Work" by Norman Spinrad; "Fantasy and the Believing Reader" by Orson Scott Card; "Raising Hackles" by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #43 Interview with James White; "The Porno Novel Biz" by Anonymous; "How To Be A Science Fiction Critic" by Orson Scott Card; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; "Once Over Lightly" by Gene DeWeese; SF News by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #35 Interviews with Fred Saberhagen and Don Wollheim; "The Way It Is" by Barry Malzberg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; "Coming Apart at the Themes" by Bob Shaw.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #36 Interview with Roger Zelazny; A Profile of Philip K. Dick by Charles Platt; "Outside the Whale" by Christopher Priest; "Science Fiction and Political Economy" by Mack Reynolds; Interview with Robert A. Heinlein; "You Got No Friends in This World" by Orson Scott Card.

\$1.50 per copy from #37 onward

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #37 Interview with Robert Anton Wilson; "We're Coming Through the Window!" by Barry N. Malzberg; "Inside the Whale" by Jack Williamson, Jerry Pournelle, and Jack Chalker; "Unities in Digression" by Orson Scott Card.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #38 Interview with Jack Williamson; "The Engines of the Night" by Barry N. Malzberg; "A String of Days" by Gregory Benford; "The Alien Invasion" by Larry Niven; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; SF News by Elton Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #39 Interview with Gene Wolfe; "The Engines of the Night"-Part Two by Barry N. Malzberg; "The Nuke Standard" by Ian Watson; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; SF News by Elton Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #40 Interview with Robert Sheckley; 4-way conversation: Arthur C. Clarke, Harlan Ellison, Fritz Leiber & Mark Wells; "The Engines of the Night"-Part Three by Barry N. Malzberg; Darrell Schweitzer; SF News by Elton T. Elliott

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #41 Space Shuttle Report by Clifford R. McMurray; "Chuck's Latest Bucket" by David Gerrold; Interview with Michael Whelan; "The Bloodshot Eye" by Gene DeWeese; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; SF News by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #42 Interview with Ian Watson; "One Writer and the Next War" by John Brunner; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; "The Human Hotline" by Elton T. Elliott.

BACK ISSUES

THE ALIEN CRITIC SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

NO OTHER BACK ISSUES ARE
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WELL-KNOWN SF & FANTASY WRITERS,
EDITORS, PUBLISHERS AND FANS.

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FEATURED CONTRIBUTIONS

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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. Lafferty; "The Tren-
chant Bludgeon" by Ted White;
"Translations From the Editorial"
by Marion Z. Bradley.

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 Shav-
er Papers" by Richard S. Shaver.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #10 Interview
with Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest of
Strange and Wonderful Birds" by
Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's
Guest of Honor speech; The Hein-
lein Reaction.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #14 Inter-
view with Philip Jose Farmer;
"Thoughts on Logan's Run" by Will-
iam F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by
John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #15 Inter-
view 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 Inter-
view with Jerry Pournelle; "The
True and Terrible History of Sci-
ence Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
"The Literary Masochist" by Rich-
ard Lupoff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17 Inter-
view with George R.R. Martin; In-
terview with Robert Anton Wilson;
"Philip K. Dick: A parallax View"
by Terrence M. Green; "Microcos-
mos" by R. Faraday Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 Inter-
view with Lester del Rey; Inter-
view 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 Inter-
view with Philip K. Dick; Interview
with Frank Kelly Freas; "The Note-
books of Mack Sikes" by Larry Niven;
"Angel Fear" by Freff; "The Vivi-
sector" by Darrell Schweitzer.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 Inter-
views: Theodore Sturgeon, and Joe
Haldeman; "Noise Level" by John
Brunner; "The Vivisector" by Dar-
rell Schweitzer; "The Gimlet Eye"
by John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #21 Inter-
view with Leigh Brackett & Edmond
Hamilton; Interview with Tim Kirk;
"The Dream Quarter" by Barry Malz-
berg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #22 Inter-
view with John Varley; "S-F and
S-E-X" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "After-
thoughts on Logan's Run" by William
F. Nolan; "An Evolution of Cons-
ciousness" by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #23 Inter-
views: A.E. van Vogt, and Jack
Vance, and Piers Anthony; "The
Silverberg That Was" by Robert
Silverberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #24 Inter-
views: Bob Shaw, David G. Hartwell
and Algis Budrys; "On Being a Bit
of a Legend" by Algis Budrys.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #25 Inter-
views with George Scithers, Poul
Anderson and Ursula K. Le Guin;
"Flying Saucers and the Stymie
Factor" by Ray Palmer; ONE IMMORTAL
MAN--Part One.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #26 Inter-
views with Gordon R. Dickson and
Larry Niven; "Noise Level" by
John Brunner; "Fee-dom Road" by
Richard Henry Klump; ONE IMMORTAL
MAN--Part Two.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #27 Inter-
views with Ben Bova and Stephen
Fabian; "Should Writers be Serfs
...or Slaves?"; SF News; SF Film
News; The Ackerman Interview; ONE
IMMORTAL MAN--Part Three.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #28 Inter-
view with C.J. Cherryh; "Beyond
Genocide" by Damon Knight; ONE IM-
MORTAL MAN--Conclusion; SF News;
SF Film News & Reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #29 Inter-
views with John Brunner, Michael
Moorcock, and Hank Stine; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; SF News;
SF Film News & Reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #30 Inter-
views with Joan D. Vinge, Stephen
R. Donaldson, and Norman Spinrad;
"The Awards Are Coming" by Orson
Scott Card; SF News; SF Film News
& Reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #31 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "On the
Edge of Futuria" by Ray Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #32 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt--Part
Two; Interview with Orson Scott
Card; "You Got No Friends in This
World" by Orson Scott Card; "The
Human Hotline" by Elton T. Elliott.

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view with Charles Sheffield; "A
Writer's Natural Enemy---Editors"
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