

# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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## KLINE'S VENUS NOVELS

by James Turner

The Venus novels of Otis Adelbert Kline, written in imitation of the Mars novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs, never equalled the creations of the master, but were themselves imitated by the latter in his Venus books (not on a par with Kline's).

Venus, like Burroughs' Mars, has feudalism intertwined with science, telekinetic aircraft flying over slave-tilled land, and countryside teeming with monsters. However, there are two important differences. First, although the heroes go to Venus psionically like John Carter went to Mars, they inhabit bodies of natives. Second, the alien civilization is eons ago—not in the present.

THE PLANET OF PERIL (Argosy, 7/20/29—six part serial, McClurg, Avalon, Ace) tells how the very rich and bored Robert Grandon is sent to Venus to occupy the body of a captive prince. He soon escapes and is leading a revolt against Vernia, and then fighting to return her to her rightful throne, although she is the woman responsible for making him a prisoner! The action is fast and wild from the slave pens of intelligent termites and a jungle, to warehouses of a vanished race and the torture room of a traitor.

THE PRINCE OF PERIL (Argosy 1930, McClurg, Avalon, Ace) re-

lates how Borgen Takkor, a Martian of the time of the Venerian civilization and who has changed places with an Earthman (see THE SWORDSMAN OF MARS), changes to Venus and finds himself at home—a home infested with assassins! He is kidnapped, rescues a princess, visits sentient apes, immortals who are more and less than men, and other marvels. Of course, right prevails.

THE PORT OF PERIL ("The Buccaneers of Venus," Weird Tales 1932, Grandon, Avalon) is not up to the standards of the previous books and is mostly capture-and-escape. The plot concerns the efforts of Venerian rulers, Grandon and Takkor included, to subjugate a pirate race, the Huitsenni, who have captured Vernia. A very good new character debuts, Kantar the Gunner. Allowing for its faults, it is worth the time to read for the descriptions of Venus.

Avalon Books and Ace Books have recently been reprinting this series along with the two later Martian novels, with the latter edited to make them appear the first books in the two-planet series. These books, and their relation to the Venus stories, will be considered in another article.

This series suffers less than Burroughs' Martian stories from wooden dialogue and characters, and even today, in the world of lasers and Telstar, make good reading.

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## SFR STORY RATINGS

Story category .....	NOVELLAS .....	NOVELETS ...	SHORT STORIES
Length in words .....	(19-39,000) ...	(10-18,000) ..	(up to 9,000)
Worth buying magazine for .	I-IV .....	A-C .....	a-b
Worth reading .....	V-VI .....	D-E .....	c-d
Read at your own risk ...	VII-IX .....	F-H .....	e-g

### NOVELS

(40,000+ words)

Worth buying ..... 1-5  
 Marginal ..... 6-7  
 Buy at your own risk . 8-10

The ratings designate how well we liked the story. We do not rate collections or anthologies. Two stories "worth reading" usually make an issue worth buying.

THE TOWERS OF TORON, by Samuel R. Delany.

THE LUNAR EYE, by Robert Moore Williams. Ace, N.Y. F-261, 1964. 140 & 115 pp. 40¢

THE TOWERS OF TORON, the first half of this Ace Double, describes Toromon, a futuristic aristocracy. The plot of this second of a trilogy concerns a menace called the "Lord of the Flames," an invisible non-substance which threatens the Earth. The author's poetic inclinations and vivid depiction make a mediocre plot into something better than just average fantasy.

NOVEL - 7

THE LUNAR EYE is about the race for the moon between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. Art Harper picks up clues, gets suspicious, and finds himself dealing with Tuanthans, inhabitants of the moon's far side. This is a good novella, with a well defined plot.

NOVELLA - VI

—Gene-Rider

THE GODS HATE KANSAS, by Joseph Millard. Monarch, Derby, Conn. 414, 1964. 121 pp. 40¢

This is an interesting selection about the invasion of the Earth by invisible globules of pure mental energy who arrive on meteorites and proceed to take over the minds of some of Earth's top scientists.

NOVEL - 7

—Robert Merryman

STURGEON IN ORBIT, by Theodore Sturgeon. Pyramid, N.Y. F-974, 1964. 159 pp. 40¢

This collection is up to Sturgeon's usual good quality and includes a "C," three "D's," and a "d." The best story is "The Incubi of Parallel X" (C), which deals with parallel worlds in a new and interesting manner.

A rather interesting development in this collection is Sturgeon's use of the idea of extrapolation. —Glenn Keene

Dear Mr. Franson,

I must point out that the last eight lines of the review of THE WANDERER are quite mistaken and extremely misleading. On a few occasions in the book a character briefly thinks or speaks about a science-fiction story, writer, or concept, exactly as he might think or speak of a political figure, a scientific concept, a current news story, etc., simply because they are all parts of our modern world, our mental furniture, our memories. To say that this is "using the ideas of other authors" is simply untrue. I strongly resent this suggestion that I used the concepts of others and even "parts of other SF books" to bolster my novel. That last sounds as if I'd been quoting or paraphrasing other writers—even at length!—which again simply isn't so.

Science fiction is part of our modern world. Any realistic novel of some length is bound to refer to it on occasion. To expect otherwise would be unrealistic.

—Fritz Leiber

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MAGAZINE REVIEWS by Dean M. Sandin

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Serials are not rated until the review of their final installment. Fantasy is not rated.

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Fantastic, March, 1964. 130 pp. 50¢ (3/7)

"The Graveyard Heart" (not about vampires and such), by Roger Zelazny, deals with a man, Alvin Moore, who wishes to join the Party Set, an exclusive group of people whose lives are spent in attending a party or two each year. The rest of their time is spent in age-defying cold sleep. Thus they live for a fantastic length of time, from the viewpoint of a non-Set member. Moore succeeds in entering the Set, but finds more than he expected. NOVELLA - VII

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Galaxy, April, 1964. 194 pp. 50¢ (3/7)

Cordwainer Smith's long novella, "The Boy Who Bought Old Earth," isn't bad—in fact, the writing is definitely good—but, as in so many of Smith's stories, the plot seems rather pointless. He injects little interest into the action, and the reader may be apt to think, "So what?" when something happens to Rod McBan, the main character. Young McBan, the son of a rich family on the richest planet in the galaxy, becomes a legal adult and with the aid of a special computer in speculating his super-fortune he manages to do what the title indicates: buy the Earth. NOVELLA - VI  
In "The Blasphemers," Philip José Farmer explores juvenile delinquency and religious beliefs in a star-venturing alien race. (E)

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Worlds of Tomorrow, April, 1964. 162 pp. 50¢ (3/7)

"Under the Gaddyl," by C.C. MacApp, is the story of a man and his family who find themselves suddenly wanted by the alien Gaddyls who had taken over the Earth years ago. The man and family, free humans forced to live off nature as are the other relatively few free men, are not bothered by the overbearing Gaddyls—usually. The five humans' flight is told interestingly, and best of all, the tale is not depressing, but ends on a positive note. NOVELLA - V

Brian W. Aldiss' "The Dark Light-Years," another novella in the issue, has been overplayed by the editor. True, there is a "little of the instinctive revulsion nearly everyone will feel" to be found in it, but only a very small amount; science fiction readers are an open-minded group and should take this element in stride. The story itself is only fair, concerning aliens who have a certain custom unheard of by humans, perhaps never so directly approached by science fiction before. (VII)

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THE DELUGE

Frederik Pohl, editor of Galaxy, If, and Worlds of Tomorrow, seems to have opened the floodgates for novellas, at least temporarily. In the last, present and next issues of each magazine are a total of at least eight novellas, but only one serial. I hope this is a momentary ratio; Pohl usually prints good serials, ones more worthwhile than the novellas they are displaced by.

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VEGA BOOKS  
by Glenn Keene

Vega Books, Inc., began publishing science fiction about one year ago and have reprinted six SF books to date. Unfortunately the Vega books have not come up to the quality of other publishers'. It must be remembered that Vega has been in the SF field only a short time and may improve its quality.

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PLAN FOR CONQUEST, by A.A. Glynn. Vega, Clovis, Calif. VSF-5, 1964. 141 pp. 50¢

This story uses a plot that has been overworked, that of machines turning on their masters. The book is a stereotype of what science fiction can be when the plot is uninteresting, unimaginative, and undeveloped. (9)

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IN THE BEGINNING, by John E. Muller. Vega, Clovis, Calif. VSF-6, 1964. 146 pp. 50¢

The plot of IN THE BEGINNING held a promise that was never kept. The story could have been a good one if the plot had been developed but Mr. Muller failed to do this to any extent. The plot includes a galactic war, a seven-thousand-year-old alien who has lost his memory, and the future of Earth.

NOVEL - 8

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NO FUTURE IN IT, by John Brunner. Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1964. 181 pp. \$3.50

This excellent collection consists of nine short stories and two novelets: three "b's," four "c's," two "d's," one "D," and one "E."

Brunner's humor is exhibited in such stories as "The Iron Jackass" (b), "Report on the Nature of the Lunar Surface" (c), and the title story (c). These stories will produce a very enjoyable night of reading.

—John H. James

LAMBDA I AND OTHER STORIES, ed. by John Carnell. Berkley, N.Y. F883, 1964. 175 pp. 50¢

Seldom has such a high concentration of enjoyable stories appeared in an anthology. The three novelets and four short stories were first published in New Worlds—of which Carnell is editor—and have not previously been published in the U.S. Highlighting this outstanding group is Colin Kapp's lead novelet, "Lambda I" (B). It is an extremely tense and imaginative account of the rescue of a passenger vehicle that can't be brought out of the special space it uses for a medium. Also suspenseful is Brian W. Aldiss' tale of a future world crisis, "Basis for Negotiation" (C). I hope that Carnell will put out another New Worlds anthology. It would be a bargain even if it were only half as good as this.

—Dean M. Sandin

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WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD, by Andre Norton. Ace, N.Y. F-263, 1964. 192 pp. 40¢

QUEST FOR KOLDER was the prepublication title of this swords-and-sorcery sequel to WITCH WORLD. Simon Tregarth concludes the struggle with the Kolder, who are also alien to this parallel world in which swordsmen and witches are major factors. Read WITCH WORLD (5) first.

NOVEL - 5

—The Editor

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