

Dlien

SF/Fantasy News/Review 'Zine - - - - - 1st August, 1973 Issue (#102)
Editor & Publisher: Don Miller - - - - - 25¢ per copy, 10/32.00

In This Issue --

IN THIS ISSUE; IN BRIEF (misc. notes/comments); COLOPHON pg 1

S.F. PARADE: Book Reviews (DON D'AMASSA: What Entropy Means to Me, by Geo. Alec Effinger; The Lost Land, by Edison Marshall; Bernhard the Conqueror, by Sam Lundwall; GENE WOLFE: Ficciones, by Jorge Luis Borges; HAL HALL: Hiero's Journey, by Stirling E. Lanier) pg 2

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER: Reviews of June, 1973 Prozines, by Richard Delap (AMAZING, ANALOG, F&SF, HAUNT OF HORROR, WORLDS OF IF, VERTEX, WEIRD TALES) pp 3-10

THE AMATEUR PRESS: U.S. Fanzines received pg 10

In Brief --

Longer than usual Delap column this time, with all the new prozines.

Will go on vacation shortly, so #103 may not get out until we return (at end of August). #103 will be "news" issue, like #'s 95 and 101. Should be getting out 2-3 issues per month from now on.

TWJ status report: #80 paper (we assume) ordered by Brian Burkey (at least, we sent him the money for it....), so maybe some action soon on this front (if not by Torcon, maybe by Philcon). #82 typed (except for new fanzine column to replace one published in SOTWJ #96, which we expect next week) and mostly run off (goofed up four pages, so will have to rerun them; sob!). As soon as pages to be run off by Bob Pavlat and stencils to receive artwork by Alexis Gilliland are returned, we'll put finishing touches on issue and get it out. Expect it sometime between Aug. 27 and Sept. 15. (I.e., we'll mail it during that time; it will take a bit longer to reach you, as it will go bookrate....)

ETERNITY #2 out. Will be reviewed as soon as we get a volunteer (we'll give it a quick review in SOTWJ, but would still like a proper review from someone more capable than us). And we wish that whoever picked up #1 at WSFA meeting would either review it or return it....

SFRA has put out an 88-page book review index, covering reviews in ASTOUNDING/ANALOG 1949-69, F&SF 1949-69, and GALAXY 1950-69. We'll cover this in more detail in SOTWJ #103.

There will be a TWJ #83, and possibly many more after that--only not as large as many of the recent issues.... (We've already started typing #83.)

If rumors we hear are correct, we may have to find a new name for TWJ and SOTWJ (suggestions?), WSFA members will no longer get special subscription rates (will now have to renew at 10/32), and so on. Would appreciate some official word!

SOTWJ is at least bi-weekly; subs: 25¢ (10p) ea., 10/32 (UK: 10/80p) or multiples thereof; all subs incl. any issue(s) of THE WSFA JOURNAL pubbed during sub (count as 2 or more issues, dep. on length). For info on airmail, Overseas Agents (list in #95), classified ads, etc., write ed. Address Code Meaning: see #100 or 103.

-- DLM

TWJ/SOTWJ
% D. Miller
12315 Judson Road
Wheaton, Maryland
U.S.A. 20906



TO: DENNIS LIEN (w-112)
2405 Dupont Ave. South
Apt #1
Minneapolis, MN 55405

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

What Entropy Means to Me, by Geo. Alec Effinger (Signet Books). (DON D'AMMASSA)

Effinger's first novel displays all of the sly humor that makes his shorter fiction worthwhile. The narrator, Seyt, constructs the story of his brother Dore, who left their family to seek the end of the river alongside which they live. Along the way he spoofs every device of heroic fantasy, much of science fiction, and a good many of our more mundane foibles. Worth buying at twice the price.

Ficciones, by Jorge Luis Borges ((C) 1962 by Grove Press; paperback; \$2.45).

(GENE WOLFE)

I am reviewing this far-from-new book because it is, at least in my opinion, the best of the (now) many Borges collections on the market, although because of its high price and slender pagecount it is less likely than many others to find its way into the hands of the average casual reader.

Essentially it is an expansion of The Garden of Forking Paths, Borges' first great book. It contains that story, and others which are its superior--"Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote", which Borges has said is the second (or perhaps the third) story he ever wrote, and which he has never bettered; "The Circular Ruins", which is probably his most famous story (It is the one in which an aged mystic living in the ruined temple of the god of fire fleshes a son from dream-stuff...but to tell more would be to destroy it; if you have read it you will remember it from that); "The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim", an unforgettable review of a book which has not yet appeared in this country; "The Library of Babel", in which God is conceived as a book whose circular spine fills the wall of an entire library reading room, so that the volume can never be opened; "Death and the Compass", an imitation of Chesterton which exceeds all but Chesterton's very best. There are many authors who are honored for their short fiction, which is taught in the schools and endlessly anthologized, who have never written a story as successful as the most humble of those named above. And if these are not enough, buy it for "An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain".

The Lost Land, by Edison Marshall (Curtis Books) (formerly Dian of Lost Land).

(DON D'AMMASSA)

2
Republication of this 1930 novel is as much an (insult) as a waste. It's the old formula story of an expedition that discovers a hidden valley in Antarctica, where Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal still slug it out. Naturally the goddess of the Cro-Magnon people is a half-European girl, and equally naturally she falls in love with the "virile" if somewhat stupid hero. Marshall livens up his story with some of the more blatantly racist statements I've seen. This book was garbage in 1930, and we all know what happens to garbage when it has aged.

Hiero's Journey, by Stirling E. Lanier (Chilton, Radnor PA; 1973; 280 pp.; \$6.95).

(HAL HALL)

In this post-catastrophe novel, set in the far future, Lanier has given us a curious blend of fact, extrapolation, and pure fantasy. All the usual trappings are there: atomic catastrophe, mutations, telepathy, radiation deserts, ruined cities. There is also the usual conflict--Hiero and his allies versus the forces of evil (who descended from psychologists, bio-chemists and physicists). Hiero's quest to the southern cities in search of the storied "computers", his conflicts with the mutants of the enemy, and contacts with strange races and beings make a good, fast-moving adventure yarn. Lanier needs to pay a bit more attention to biological possibilities, though. Some of his monsters are flatly impossible! Not, as the book jacket asserts, equal to Tolkien, but a good tale, well worth the time to read it.

Bernhard the Conqueror, by Sam Lundwall (DAW Books)

(DON D'AMMASSA)

This is apparently a burlesque of space opera, which is a kind of burlesque in itself. Lundwall's sequel to No Time for Heroes uses slapstick comedy and a series of ridiculous situations to pad 150 pages. I've read much better fiction in fanzines.

(dissecting)

^ THE HEART OF THE MATTER:
Magazines for June, 1973

Operational Procedures
Supervised by
Richard Delap

The big news for this month is the appearance of a new bimonthly, THE HAUNT OF HORROR, published by the Marvel Comics Group, and the quarterly revival of one of the most cherished names in horror fiction, WEIRD TALES.

Gerard Conway is editor of Marvel's publication, which follows the pattern of most of the current SF magazines by featuring an editorial, book reviews, and articles in addition to the fiction. First issues, however, are almost invariably second-rate, and with the exception of the reprinted novel, Fritz Leiber's classic Conjure Wife, this one is grist for the mill of the plebeian. The interior illustrations are generally bland and perhaps a bit too comic-bookish to please any but the youngest readers. Nevertheless it is nice to see someone willing to take a chance on today's assumedly nonexistent market for horror fiction; it would be equally pleasant to find an audience does exist, and that writers can respond without relying too heavily on proven thrill-and-chill clichés. Will it make it?--your guess is as good as mine.

On the other hand, Sam Moskowitz's revival of WEIRD TALES looks like a much safer bet, though still a chancy proposition. The magazine has been gone for nineteen years, but that period of time has done a lot to enhance a reputation that is sometimes (if not always) deserved. The first new issue features only one new story and the reprints are often obscure things from even more obscure sources, for most of the magazine's best has already been mined for the anthologies. The cover by Virgil Finlay is a gem and should whet the nostalgic appetites of older readers and collectors who are familiar with the magazine's previous appearance. Whether a new generation of readers will turn on to the magazine or not is a very iffy question, but it would be gratifying if Moskowitz can uncover some new work that will rival the classics of yesteryear and if he will become editorially more discriminating about the quality of the old stories he unearths. (The reprints in this issue are routine, though the Chambers, Dyan, Babcock, and Paine works are fairly good.)

The remaining magazines clock in a very average month.

AMAZING STORIES -- June:

Serial:

Trullion Alastor: 2262 (conclusion) -- Jack Vance.

Short Stories:

The Adventures of the Last Earthman... -- Robert F. Young.

[note: "In Search for Love" and "In His Search for Love" are appended to the title on the cover and contents page.]

Young's introspective inspection of the thoughts of a man, who believes himself the last true human in a world where people have been invaded by "sym-bionts" from space, dangles the reader helplessly over a dark chasm of uncertainty. Is the man's story the raving delusions of a mind desperately alienated from his society, or is his story the truth as seen by the only man capable of recognizing it? Is Young condemning, or merely speculating, or both? The theme is not a new one, and though Young's questioning lacks the intense insight of the human dilemma to give his drama true power, it nevertheless holds the reader during the telling. Essentially minor but readable.

Seed -- William Rotsler.

A spore from space impregnates (?) a woman who later gives birth to a monster that immediately starts eating people in the delivery room. One sort of hopes that Rotsler is playing games with old clichés, but in the end there's nothing very funny about a story that passes off poor writing with an unrelieved

(Over)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

straight face. Rotsler should be chastised, White should be buried in his own bad taste, and the reader should get his money back. Awful.

Of Course -- Betsy Curtis.

If aliens land on Earth and they are human, what will they make of the confusing social affairs of our planet and how will they ever understand the diversity? Well, Curtis proposes that they won't, and the resulting misunderstandings could very easily drive them away in fear. But for all the efforts to make these aliens and their reactions amusing, the author continually smothers the laughs with a heavy hand. Pretty dreary.

Feature:

The Clubhouse: The Enchanted Duplicator (conclusion) -- Bob Shaw & Walt Willis.

* * * *

ANALOG -- June:

Serial:

Sword and Scepter (conclusion) -- Jerry Pournelle.

Novelette:

Chester -- Bernard Deitchman.

On Guam, an experiment is underway to study a group of baboons and their aggressive behavior in relation to their environment. But when Dr. Ralston is sent by the sponsoring university to investigate some developing troubles in the project--including strange deaths and injuries to the baboons, as well as the unexplained actions of the project's overseer, Mr. Skinner--he finds himself in the middle of a maze of military interests, commercialism, and insinuations of a scientific hoax. Deitchman tells his story in a very formalized manner, befitting perhaps the underlying mystery but, as usual in such cases, leading to a sometimes dry, rather dehumanized series of dialogues and actions. In spite of this the scenes of men studying the monkeys' lifestyle hold a solid fascination, even if more from a scientific curiosity than from a dramatic standpoint. The plot is tied up quite neatly, with the slight haziness of motives adding a sense of realism that is far more believable than the usual clear-cut lines of most mysteries. Okay of kind.

Novel Excerpt:

Notebooks of Lazarus Long -- Robert A. Heinlein.

Bova terms this excerpt from Time Enough for Love: The Lives of Lazarus Long, Heinlein's latest novel, "the wit and wisdom of a man who has lived for centuries--and enjoyed every minute of it!" It is a collection of snappy opinions on mankind, his purpose and his pleasure (one and the same?), and is enough to elicit yells from readers of any and every persuasion. Yells of joy, yells of anger, it makes no difference--one simply cannot read it without an emotional response of some kind. It will surely sell many copies of the book, for who can resist wanting to know more about a man who says, for example, "One man's theology is another man's belly laugh." It's preposterous, delirious, delightful--read it!

Short Stories:

Time Cycle -- Saul Snatsky.

The paradoxes of time-travel have been fascinating SF writers for years, from genre masters like Anderson and Silverberg to new writers like Gerrold. Mr. Snatsky tells of a man returned to the Earth of three billion years ago, to collect samples to be used in determining the beginning of life on our planet, but the author is not adept enough to handle the intricacies of such matters and dismisses them in a babble of gobbledygook. Worse yet, he's adapted the general idea behind a more famous story, Arthur C. Clarke's "Before Eden" (AMAZING, June '61), and clumsily telegraphs his climax at the story's opening. A total bust.

The Whimper Effect -- J. R. Pierce.

Here's a rather cleverly worded little item that smacks of the racism and bias so often attributed to the late John Campbell--yet does it in such a way

(Cont. next page)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

that one can understand the possible misinterpretation of purpose in the search for truth. Pierce tells of the possibly unheeded (by Americans) effect of micro-waves and their use (by Russians) in gaining the upper hand in the ongoing race for supremacy. Chuck-full of little "in" jokes and swiftly told, it will probably amuse those in the know. Okay of kind.

Personality Profile:

B. F. Skinner: The Man in the Maze -- Norman Spinrad.

Articles:

Skylab Patchwork -- Frank Kelly Freas.

Into the Furniture -- Laurence M. Janifer.

* * * *

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION -- June:

Serial:

The Asutra (conclusion) -- Jack Vance.

Novellette:

Haggopian -- Brian Lumley.

A reporter jumps at the chance to interview the rich and famous Armenian, Richard Haggopian, "perhaps the world's greatest authority in ichthyology and oceanography". Traveling to the scientist's secluded island home, the reporter is fascinated by the extensive tanks of undersea life, puzzled by the man's odd assortment of servants and assistants, and finally horrified by Haggopian's confession of his life history and present plans. Lumley's story is one more addition to Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, and like most imitations of Lovecraft it accentuates this writer's weaknesses and possesses none of his strengths--i.e., an overabundance of stilted dialogue, laden with italics and exclamations, and damn little of the carefully mounted terror. Before Haggopian reaches the horrific climax to his story, the reporter notices that his beer "had gone flat"; this story doesn't take nearly so long to do exactly the same.

Short Stories:

Pax Romana -- Robin Scott Wilson.

I imagine the current Watergate scandal may have inspired this horrifyingly depressing story of a man who checks out offices for "bugs". But the man's profession is only a fraction of the matter, and the reader is inundated with the horrors of modern society in reflections that bounce off this one man as he carries out his duties, duties that give some sort of purpose to a life that is emotionally bereft. The SF element comes into play at the conclusion, doubling the depressive element by the very nature of its presence. This is a contemporary horror story, well-done but almost too much to bear. A disturbing piece.

Calling All Monsters -- Dennis Etchison.

Another item of horror here, in which Etchison takes the old Poe obsession of premature burial and the SF cliché of laboratory horrors and adapts them to a more modern surrounding. We listen in on the thoughts of a man in a hospital, considered legally dead by the attendants but actually very much alive. His will states his internal organs are to be saved for transplants, and his agony at his helplessness to stop this removal would be far more terrifying were it not such a familiar tactic. The story adds nothing to a form of fiction already successfully rendered by many predecessors. Routine.

Think Snow -- Tori Warner.

Pity poor Lucy--her lovely white teeth are rotting out of her head from the roots and the new-fallen snow of the countryside oppresses her with what she views as evil sterility. The point of the story seems to be to get Lucy on a pair of skis on a downslope, so that Warner can indulge herself with religious parallels (awkward ones, too) and overambitious, distracting symbolisms. Lucy's dire fate comes as no surprise, and the events leading to it are much too artificial to give the story any life.

Varities of Religious Experience -- Ron Goulart.

Jose Silvera, whose previous adventures as a freelance writer have taken him all over the universe (as often to avoid bill collectors as to find a job),

(Over)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

finds himself now on the planet Carob where he's the key to saving the life of Bishop Briney. As usual Goulart's humor is geared to simpleminded farce, and it's been some time since he gave up sustaining rapier-sharp dialogue and opted for speed rather than precision. His stories merely nibble rather than bite these days, which is really a shame. *sigh*

Blackberry Winter -- Doris Pitkin Buck.

The setting: the Massachusetts Bay colony of early America; the characters: a young scholar whose studies are an intense but frustrated interest in alchemy, and his young love, a woman who feels herself as the wind, seeing far beyond the settlement to mountains and lakes and a wintry wilderness; the chemistry: Buck's excellent evocation of another age, with a smooth usage of the archaic speech-forms and the chill of a love gone wrong. The fantasy element is never more than implied and Ferman states it casts an "enchanted" spell. It most certainly does. Very nice.

Verse:

Old Ahab's Friend [reprint -- 1971] -- Ray Bradbury.

Recollection, Punishing -- Doris Pitkin Buck.

Science:

The Triumph of the Moon -- Isaac Asimov.

* * * *

THE HAUNT OF HORROR -- June:

Serial:

Conjure Wife (part one) [reprint -- 1953] -- Fritz Leiber.

Novelettes:

The First Step -- John K. Diomedes.

The first in a new series of stories about Dr. Warm (and his assistant, John Diomedes, who relates the tale in a letter to a friend, circa 1936), who represents the forces of good. Evil is presented in the form of Warm's brother, Caulfield, who here has taken over the lives of an innocent rural family and turned their home into a nesting place for unspeakable evils. I say "unspeakable" because Diomedes seldom relates the horrors except with the most vague sort of suggestion, a technique which sometimes can make a terror tale doubly horrifying but in this case merely leaves the reader wondering what's going on. Characterizations are too brief and thin to gain sympathy, so this series is off to a less than satisfactory beginning.

Usurp the Night -- Robert E. Howard.

[note: this carried a 1970 copyright, but I'll review it anyway since I can't seem to trace down its original appearance.]

Like most of Howard's fiction this story is as predictable as winter snow in the Rockies. A young man, watchful after the disappearances of pets and people, becomes suspicious of his reclusive neighbor, and when his fiancée is kidnapped he is forced to rescue her from the clutches of the neighbor and the horrible monster summoned "out of the Void". Howard tries for a Lovecraftian tone but emerges with a mawkish, shallow hero-saves-heroine mess--the dialogue is so stilted that it makes Olde English sound flowing--with a ho-hum climax as the hero destroys the slime beast. Dreadful stuff, certainly not worth rescuing from oblivion, even temporarily.

Short Stories:

Neon -- Harlan Ellison.

[note: to be reviewed next issue, when the story will be reprinted in a corrected version; someone mixed up the pages this time through.]

Loup Garou -- A. A. Attanasio.

This story comes very close to success, and misses by only a hair. It tells of two Haitian brothers who, on the death of their mother, a Voodoo priestess, are determined to protect her bones from Hougan Baah, a local magician with the power to change into a werewolf. Attanasio manages his plot well but is never

(Cont. next page)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

quite able to inject it with the chills necessary to make its moments of suspense gripping. The inconclusive climax isn't much help, either, and though the author's writing style is brisk and uncluttered, his story is never more than almost good.

Ghost in the Corn Crib -- R. A. Lafferty.

Leave it to Lafferty to tell a ghost story that meets all the requirements of the traditional ghost story and yet probably isn't. I say "probably" because the way he tells it is in the conversation of two young boys, one who tells the stories and believes them (or is he just spinning tales, as is a boy's wont), the other who listens and disbelieves (but he's the one who sees the ghost... or does he?). It's a lighthearted item, and a very convincing picture of adolescents. Entertaining.

Seeing Stingy Ed -- David R. Bunch.

A salesman stops at a small-town feed store to make his pitch to the owner, Ed, but a young man who's spending the day winding twine into a rope delays the meeting several times. The delay is at last explained, but only so that Bunch can pull off a rather limp joke which lacks the needed surprise to make this short item work. Fair.

A Nice Home -- Beverly Goldberg.

The "evil" acts of some children can often be attributed to desperation, as in this story of a little girl whose parents are drunken and negligent and perish in a fire their child deliberately sets. Unfortunately Goldberg doesn't offer any insights into the parents or the child, and her tale is generally meaningless and quite contrived. Routine.

Night Beat -- Ramsey Campbell.

Constable Sloane is young and new to his job, and his superiors are sympathetic when his reactions to the first murder on his beat seem strongly emotional. But Sloane isn't so much frightened as determined, for he has an "instinct" which leads him to a museum in the dead of night and a solving of the case. Campbell handles this one carefully and pulls off a neat twist ending with style. Good of kind.

Article:

The Lurker in the Family Room: Thoughts on Four Modern Horror Novels -- Dennis O'Neil.

* * * *

WORLDS OF IF -- May-June:

Serial:

Our Children's Children (part one) -- Clifford D. Simak.

Novelettes:

Susie's Reality -- Bob Stickgold.

A doctoral project turns into a very real and pressing danger as one small monkey escapes from its cage, causing death to any person who comes into its sight. Beginning as an experiment to study young monkeys' reactions to "contrived" realities--in which holograms and trap doors are used to make them take for granted certain objects' disappearances and/or untouchableness--the researchers are suddenly confronted with one monkey, Susie, who so believes the created reality that she develops the mental power to fit all objects into it, including people. Stickgold builds suspense very well as the escaped animal is hunted, filling in the background detail with flashbacks as the final confrontation is reached and the new concept of "reality" dashes our present standards to bits while at least one human learns to apply the new standard. Very well done.

Mnarra Mobilis -- Sydney J. Van Scyoc.

Van Scyoc seems to be developing a series about colonists from overcrowded Earth who have a five-year allotment to find and settle planets of their own. This one is better than the first ("Noepti-Noc", GALAXY Nov.-Dec. '72), although it concludes rather abruptly and with little indication of the eventual success or failure of the colonists, who are confronted by traveling plants that move

(Over)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

across the land to meet and mate in a literally explosive union. Van Scyoc gives us two viewpoints here, that of the humans fighting to protect their settlement, and that of the semiconscious plants fighting to maintain their instinctual mating ritual and to produce offspring. The author presents neither side as victors, and one wonders if she will eventually finish the story or leave its basic "moral" dilemma up to the readers. Interesting.

Promise Them Anything -- Dean McLaughlin.

With a story more suited to the ANALOG stable than here, McLaughlin tells of man's first meeting with the alien Bzrabba, who come to Earth with a demand for all the planet's iron resources and the evacuation of all humans. Of course men aren't particularly fond of such demands, but a realization of the aliens' superior technology prods us to consider the aliens' proposal and to think of a way to come out with the best end of the deal. This kind of tale is so familiar by now that it takes much skill to wring out anything interesting, and McLaughlin doesn't put much effort into it. The humor is juvenile (lots of snickers about the aliens' bad smell) and the characters are cut-and-dried stereotypes who try harder for chuckles (and fail) than for personality. In all, an unimaginative concept executed with pedestrian patience and talent.

Short Story:

Experiment -- Beverly Goldberg.

The title refers to a seeding of other worlds with colonists whose memories have been expunged, in the hope they can, without preconceptions of love and hate from their planet of origin, develop a human paradise which will reveal to the rest of mankind how such eden may be achieved. The plan backfires, as any reader will suspect, but Ms. Goldberg's premise hinges on an idea that seems rather dubious and is too assuming to be very convincing. Routine.

* * * *

VERTEX -- June:

Novelette:

All the Sounds of the Rainbow -- Norman Spinrad.

Bill Marvin decides to investigate the "resort" at which his ex-wife Karen spends a good amount of her monthly alimony. He finds that she is addicted to the scrambled sensory impressions received from Harry Krell, who has turned his special talent for "synesthesia"--an ability to see sound, hear color, etc.--into a profitable business since he can project this ability onto others, at least temporarily, and for a fee. When Bill finds the craving for this escape as addictive as drugs, he becomes as trapped as Karen; but Spinrad, like Bill, lets his situation become "emotionally flat". His characters are a group of losers who have little chance to give battle--even the exploiting Krell is innocently trapped in his power--and Spinrad is unable (or unwilling) to engage the reader's sympathy, for his people are too shallow to gain even pity for being weak-willed. Without deep characterizations Spinrad's story is downbeat to no purpose and will not sustain interest. Routine.

Short Stories:

Three Tinks on the House -- F. M. Busby.

Stories of the polluted future are so common now that their shock value is wearing thin. Busby seems to know this, however, and while we get the usual list of dangers and inconveniences we also get a clever, if none too pleasant, glimpse of ourselves as we adjust and accept. The problems of a future family-man--from a brash range of sexual kinks to how-to-get-from-home-to-work-safely--give Busby a chance to whip up some frothy icing for a heavy cake. Okay of kind.

The Alibi Machine -- Larry Niven.

When the formal murder mystery rears its head in science fiction it often gets cut off by the author's inability to resist the temptation of hiding facts with gadgets. Niven has a gadget in this story, an instant transport system which flicks people from place to place in a moment, but he uses it well as a

(Cont. next page)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

plot device and not merely as a getaway system. Better yet the actions of his characters are reasonable and well-handled, especially the murderer (although his actual motive is rather an SF tour de force). Light but tasty.

Crash Cameron and the Slime Beast -- Steven Utley.

This one's a short little spoof that plays off the general and still far-too-popular concept that SF is just that silly "Buck Rogers stuff". Crash discovers his lovely but sometimes unruly female companion gone from the spaceship and the telltale tracks of a loathsome BEM. Rushing off for one more familiar rescue, Crash crashes into one of the hard facts of life. Well, okay, it might have worked if Utley were just a bit more witty with his dialogue and a little less determined to adhere so strictly to the method. Tain't funny, McGee....

The Jewel -- D. William Paul.

Barney Lowell is in one hell of a predicament--with a priceless jewel from the rings of Saturn in his grasp, a girl in his arms, and a group of greedy thieves after him with guns, Barney is busy trying to keep alive on Mars while keeping the priceless stone in his possession. The SF element in this actionful but mindless story is totally negligible; in fact, you'll find the plot and all its tired twists so familiar that it's unnecessary to finish reading the damned thing. Mickey Spillane on Mars, yet. Agh!

Barbarossa -- Edward Wellen.

Somewhere out there in the endless oceans there may still be a German submarine and its mad Commander, waiting for the day when Germany will return to power and the sub can return home in glory. In the meantime, we must beware since this "ghost" may be precipitating a plan to start a new war to gain its own end. I suppose this idea can be considered vaguely satirical, but Wellen handles it much too briefly and the idea alone does not carry it off.

The Shortest S-F Story Ever Told -- Forrest J. Ackerman.

Not just one word but one letter is the total content of this "story"--at least, according to the editor's blurb, which ignores the additional twenty or so words needed to give it some sense. This is the sort of contrivance that is infuriating rather than satisfying, and deserves no more than a one-word criticism: Reject.

Reprint:

Look, You Think You've Got Troubles -- Carol Carr.

/from: Orbit 5, edited by Damon Knight; Putnam, 1969.7

. Articles:

The Next Drop You Drink -- James Sutherland.

How Big Is the Universe Today, Mommy? -- Igor Bohassian.

The Neglected Majority -- Dr. Gregory Benford.

Skylab -- Jack Jardine.

Features:

An Interview with Robert Silverberg -- Paul Turner.

The Art of Tim Kirk /illustrated/ -- William Rotsler.

* * * *

WEIRD TALES -- Summer:

Short Story:

Funeral In the Fog -- Edward D. Hoch.

A new Simon Ark story here, in which Ark is called to help a man who is convinced the devil himself is after him. The man relates the tale of a search for hidden gold on Java, the occult murder of a young Chinese girl, and his own fear of death at the hands of the murderer who may be the devil incarnate. Despite the supernatural trappings, Ark solves the case and proves it to be merely an ingenious and non-occult plot, but mystery fans won't have much trouble sorting out motives even though the method is preposterously far-fetched. Routine thriller.

Reprints:

The Watchers /1945/ -- Ray Bradbury.

Perdita /1897/ -- Hildegarde Hawthorne.

(Over)

DISSECTING THE HEART OF THE MATTER (Continued) --

- Spear and Fang /1925/ -- Robert E. Howard.
The Guest of Honour /1902/ -- Frank Norris.
The Sign of Venus /1903/ -- Robert W. Chambers.
The Woman in Red /1899/ -- Muriel Campbell Dyar.
Unmasked /1900/ -- Muriel Campbell Dyar.
The Serpent City /1919/ -- Edison Marshall.
A Tropical Horror /1905/ -- William Hope Hodgson.
The Man with the Brown Beard /1896/ -- Nathaniel T. Babcock.
The Black Hands /1903/ -- Albert Bigelow Paine.
The Medici Boots /1936/ -- Pearl Norton Swet.

Article:

William Hope Hodgson--The Early Years (part one) -- Sam Moskowitz.

Verse:

Sylvane--The Silver Birches -- A. Merritt.

The Canal -- H. P. Lovecraft.

 THE AMATEUR PRESS: U.S. Fanzines Rec'd

MAYBE (Irvin Koch, % 835 Chattanooga Bank Bldg., Chattanooga, TN 37402; offset; bi-monthly; 50¢ ea., 6/\$2.50) -- #29 (Aug '73; "WORLDS OF FANDOM" on cover) -- 20 pp., incl. cover (by Elaine Wojciechowski); interior illos by Bill Guy, Dave Shank; pp. 3-18 consist of a fan-language glossary: "Fanspeak--The Jargon of Madness"; short sections on the N3F Bureaus and the Southern Fandom Confederation. ## #30 (undated) -- 20 pp., incl. cover (by Carol Stockwell); interior illos by Sheryl Birkhead, Bill Guy, Tom Foster, John D. Berry; short fanzine reviews and news notes garnered therefrom; lettercolumn; info on new N3F members. ##### A useful and informative publication. The "fanspeak" glossary provides a valuable updating of material previously published in various places.

THE ORGANLEGGER (Mike Glycer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342; mimeo; 25¢ ea., 12/\$2 U.S.; elsewhere, 35¢ ea., 9/\$2; no schedule given; "a fannish newszine") -- #6 (II:1) (undated): 4 pp.; illo by Freff; Westercon 26 Report; Andy Porter on the "Western Watergate" (i.e., alleged LAConCom hanky-panky). ## Newszines have suddenly began sprouting up all over the place, with only a few lasting very long. Mike is a hard-worker and a prolific publisher, so T.O. has better-than-avg. chances.

PREHENSILE (Mike Glycer, address above; mimeo (offset cover); 50¢; no schedule given) -- #9 (May '73): 71 pp. / cover (by Bea Barrio); interior illos by Barrio, Shull, Rotsler, Canfield, Waller, Pearson, Tiani, Morris; Editorial; Richard Wadholm column (on German SF rock & misc. subjects); Stan Burns reviews Heinlein's Time Enough for Love; poem by Mark Tinkle; Dan Goodman's "Dark Alleys of Fan-history" column (thish: "Past Hugo Winning Fmz"); Aljo Svoboda's "Captain Neo Says" column; Proceedings from "April 1973 SFHA Ranquet"; short humor bit by Dave Gerrold; book reviews by Darrell Schweitzer and Stan Burns; Bill Warren reviews films; SF Rock Record reviews; lettercolumn. ## A bit more fannish in slant than recent issues, and therefore less interesting than usual to sercon fans (like us)--but with plenty of material for those read fanzines to be entertained.

CHRONICLE (Andy Porter, POBox 4175, New York, NY 10017; offset; avail. for two 8¢ stamps or news; no schedule given (believe this was going to be monthly....) -- #2 (30 July '73): 2 pp.; editorial; fannish news from all over; reprinted pages from Bruce Pelz APA L 'zine showing financial figures relating to LACon and LASFS Building Fund (a bit of documentary evidence re the "Western Watergate", as Andy calls it) (am still waiting for full details about original controversy before publishing Andy's "Western Watergate" letter re same (fingers slipped and we originally typed "Westergate" before noticing it and making correction)). ## Andy needs more fannish news to make CHRONICLE a success. Send him some.