

SON OF THE WSFA JOURNAL

DLIEN

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In Brief -- (URGENTLY NEEDED FOR TWJ #84: LoC's on #83 & illos)

First issue of non-Don Miller Son. As per Don's notification in #'s 151 & 152 this is one of at least two double-issues of SOTWJ that will be pubbed between now and 15 August. ##Remember, send all material for TWJ/SOTWJ, /renewals, to Bill Hixon, 870 Quince Orchard Blvd., Gaithersburg, Maryland 20760 (301 - 977-9159) 'til 15 August. (Special note, see "Odds & Ends", further along.) Please make these submissions plainly marked "FOR TWJ/SOTWJ" on outside. ## TWJ #80 is in fact in our hands and lacks only 14 pages to be run off, hopefully with this accomplished, this "monster" will accompany TWJ #84 in the mails.## This is a special issue in another way other than the fact that Don is not editing and publishing it. By request two of newer reviewers in the area were asked to take an overview of the nominees for the Hugos. We would like to see (here from) you concerning your opinions on these pieces as they constitute such a departure (in size, at least) from the norm.

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--WJH

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THE CLUB CIRCUIT

WSFA Report -- Minutes of the Washington S. F. Association meeting of June 21, 1974;

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 p. m. Lisa Ivey taking over in place of missing recording secretary. Owing to the missing secretary the minutes were neither read nor accepted. Committee reports were read and accepted.

Under the old business section the Disclave Committee turned over its excess funds to WSFA. On the new business side Jack Chalker reminded the members that starting in 1962 WSFA had put a small ad in the Worldcon program book. The motion to carry on this tradition was seconded and carried unanimously; Jack Chalker in charge.

Ted Pauls informed the membership of Ron Bounds' injury and subsequent confinement to his bed and passed around a 'get-well' card for signatures.

Tom Whitmore announced (again) his pending move to California.

Final plans were tossed about concerning the now past 4th of July picnic and with this final piece of business the shortest meeting on record was adjourned at 9:35 p. m.

- Lisa Ivey, Acting Secretary, WSFA

MEDIA -- TV, Radio, etc. of interest (including The Local Scene)

Radio Notes: WAMU-FM (88.5): Schedule missing for later July.

Movie Notes: The Birds will be shown July 31, 8:00 p. m., UMBC, Lecture Hall #3.

Area Summer Openings: The Parallax View (June 26: suspense; most reviews running love/hate). The Terminal Man (June 28; based on M. Crichton book; universally panned to date; The Golden Voyage of Sinbad (July 3; special effects by Harry Harryhausen); Captain Kronos, Vampire Hunter, and Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell (Hammer package; July 17).

TV Notes: WMAL-TV (Channel 7) week of July 28th thru August 3rd (all movie times 4 to 6:00 p. m.)

Monday, 7/29: The Haunting, 1963, Julie Harris & Claire Bloom

Tuesday, 7/30: Cauldron of Blood, 1968, Boris Karloff, Vivica Lindfors, Jean Pierre Aumont

Wednesday, 7/31: Them, 1954, James Whitmore, Edmund Gwenn, James Arness, and Fess Parker

Thursday, 8/1: Count Dracula, 1971, Christopher Lee, Herbert Lom

Friday, 8/2: The Skull, 1965, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee

The Local Scene -- Isis Center for the Research & Study of the Esoteric Arts and Sciences; lecture hall: 8313 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, MD. Public Forums: July 15, 8:00 p. m.; "Physics at Work"; admission by donation: July 29, 8:00 p. m., "Project UFO", admission \$2.00. September 9th, 8:00 p. m.; "Exploring Whole Life Styles"; admission by donation. ## Summer Study Programs -- Astrology: Basic Chart Erection, July 30 - September 3, Tuesdays, 7 - 8 P. M.; Fee, \$20 plus books; Basic Chart Interpretation, July 30 - September 3, Tuesdays, 8 - 10 P. M., Fee \$25 plus book: Hypnosis: (taught by a professional hypnotist, certificate issued upon completion) begins Tuesday evening July 23 through August 27th, 7:30 - 10:30 P. M., Fee, \$125 (deposit of \$50 required in advance. Payments arranged for balance.) For further information call 585-2886, weekdays 10 A. M. - 6 P. M. The Isis Center also offers some other courses, which are not listed here because the summer session already started. Information on them can be obtained for the Fall session by calling the above number. Pre-registration is recommended. A \$5 non-refundable deposit will reserve space in each section, except Hypnosis.

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW

Book and Story Reviews

by: David W. Weems and Wayne V. Piatt

BEST NOVEL:

- The People of the Wind, by Poul Anderson (ANALOG; Signet)
Rendezvous with Rama, by Arthur C. Clarke (GALAXY; Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich)
The Man Who Folded Himself, by David Gerrold (Random House; SFBC)
Time Enough for Love, by Robert A. Heinlein (Putnam; Berkley)
Protector, by Larry Niven (Ballantine Books)

BEST NOVELLA:

- "Death and Designation Among the Asadi", by Michael Bishop (IF, February '73)
 "The White Otters of Childhood", by Michael Bishop (F&SF, July '73)
 "Chains of the Sea", by Gardner Dozois (Chains of the Sea, Robert Silverberg, editor; Thomas Nelson, Inc.)
 "The Girl Who Was Plugged In", by James Tiptree, Jr. (New Dimensions III, Robert Silverberg, editor; Signet)
 "The Death of Doctor Island", by Gene Wolfe (Universe 3, Terry Carr, editor; Random House)

BEST NOVELETTE:

- "The City on the Sand", by George Alec Effinger (F&SF, April '73)
 "The Deathbird", by Harlan Ellison (F&SF, March '73)
 "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand", by Vonda N. McIntyre (ANALOG, October '73)
 "He Fell into a Dark Hole", by Jerry Pournelle (ANALOG, March '73)
 "Love Is the Plan, the Plan Is Death", by James Tiptree, Jr. (The Alien Condition, Stephen Goldin, editor; Ballantine)

BEST SHORT STORY:

- "Those Who Walk Away from Omelas", by Ursula K. LeGuin (New Dimensions III, Robert Silverberg, editor; Signet)
 "Wings", by Vonda N. McIntyre (The Alien Condition, Stephen Goldin, editor; Ballantine)
 "With Morning Comes Mistfall", by George R. R. Martin (ANALOG, May '73)
 "Construction Shack", by Clifford D. Simak (IF, February '73)

The following two sections, the first by David Weems and the second by Wayne V. Piatt, comprise a set of reviews of the Hugo nominations that are competing for the Hugos to be awarded at the 32nd World Science-Fiction Convention, Discon II, that will be held Labor Day weekend in Washington. David Weems will review all the nominees, giving a wrapup for each category reviewed. Wayne Piatt will review only the stories. Each will give his picks in the categories that he has reviewed.

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS — David W. Weems

The following reviews, grouped by category, cover all the novels and stories that have been nominated for the '73 Hugo awards, to be presented at Discon II. This project originally started as a group of reviews that were to cover those novels that could expect to be nominated for the Hugo. Two reviews, of Clarke's Rendezvous with Rama and Heinlein's Time Enough for Love, were published earlier as part of that project, but because of the lag time between their submission and their publication in SOTWJ, at least one of them was published after the nominations had been announced. Both of those reviews have been reprinted here, as they were originally written, so do not be surprised at the time element that is evident in both. The majority of the other reviews were done over a seven day period while I was on vacation in the mountains of North Carolina, each story being read, digested, and promptly reviewed

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

while the story was still fresh in my mind. Thus the reviews represent my initial reactions to the books or stories, and in a very few cases, those reactions have changed in the intervening several weeks, or have been modified slightly. The reactions of a number of friends to the Clarke and Heinlein reviews have also dictated that information that was not presented in those reviews now be presented. For all these reasons, each category will have a wrapup section to bring my thoughts on the category up to date and give my pick of the group under consideration. Additionally, at the end of the sections on the nominations, there is a short section where I have issued my thoughts on several books and stories that are conspicuously absent from the nomination finals. It is my hope that reading these reviews will help the reader to clarify his thoughts on the various stories, stimulate him to read a story that he was not considering due to having already made a choice, or provide information and viewpoint that he does not possess. There was an unusually fine crop of stories nominated this year, with a few notable exceptions. All but a couple deserve to be read and carefully considered before the reader makes his final choice on the ballot. With this in mind, here they are. Have at 'em.

THE NOVELS:

Rendezvous with Rama, by Arthur C. Clarke (reprinted from SOTWJ #146) — I have been wondering for some time whether or not the quality of Clarke's work might not fall off as it has with some other noted science fiction authors lately. This book is a magnificent answer: it most definitely has not!

The subject of this novel is a familiar one to just about all science fiction readers: the first contact with the culture of an alien race. In this case it takes the shape of an enormous artifact hurtling into the solar system from deep space, which turns out to be a cylindrical, completely enclosed world. A very competent space crew is diverted to investigate, and they find at first what appears to be a dead ship of enormous magnitude, with no visible means of propulsion. Its deadness is not total, though. As it nears the sun and warms up, it begins to come alive. The book rolls on from this point in magnificent fashion, heading into territory that begins to look very familiar at numerous points, only to have Clarke take a tangent that previous authors missed. The ending sections take a beautiful twist off the course of previous "first contact" books, and as if that were not enough, Clarke saves the biggest twister in the whole book for the last sentence. Do not, however, read the ending first. Read it all the way through the way you're supposed to, and stay alert. He leaves clues lying carefully disguised all through the book.

Of all the potential Hugo nominees for this coming worldcon that I have had the opportunity to read so far, this one is currently tops on my list. I am not sure that Clarke has written anything that is better than this, and his merely good work is better than about ninety percent of what is written in the name of science fiction. On both scales, brilliancy and enjoyability, I rate this one a solid nine. Put it on your "must reading" list.

Time Enough for Love, by Robert A. Heinlein (reprinted from SOTWJ #144) — This is one of the books from 1973 that is almost certain to end up nominated for the Hugo award, and unless I find five books that are all better than this one, it will probably be on my list as well. I will not, however, vote for this book for the Hugo when that time comes. My reasons are that Heinlein himself has written better, and so have others — and at least one of the latter (Rendezvous with Rama) was written in '73.

My impression of TefL is that it is a series of stories and short novels, all dealing with the lifetime of Lazarus Long, which Heinlein decided to sew together into a monster volume. In the process he tells some totally delightful tales, at least a couple that border on being real tearjerkers, almost all of which are quite well told.

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

My primary qualms with this book, then, are two. First, Heinlein still seems to be reacting to the many critics who maintain that he can't write a good story incorporating sex. For the most part, he does a better job here than previously in that regard, but I wish he would quit trying so obviously. His primary forte has always been his storytelling, and when he sticks to that, he has few equals and no betters. Secondly, if he had thrown out his final back-into-childhood portion of the book and written a forward-looking ending that was plausible, I probably would have considered TEfL good enough for the Hugo. I got sick enough of Oedipus in my studies of psychology and classical literature without having him resurrected in the guise of Lazarus Long. The only constructive thing that segment did for me was to fill in details of Lazarus' childhood and family that I hadn't read earlier.

In spite of its shortcomings, this is still very fine reading, most especially if you take advantage of the natural break points and don't attempt to read it all in one session. It should definitely be read by anyone who enjoys Heinlein, and most everyone else as well. However, because of its shortcomings, I have to rate TEfL 8 on the enjoyment scale, and 7 on the brilliancy scale. Wish that I could, in all honesty, rate this one higher. It's very fine Heinlein, but not his best.

The Man Who Folded Himself, by David Gerrold — As much as I admire most of what I have read by David Gerrold, I was most surprised when I found that this book had made it to the final nominations for the Hugo. For what it is, that is a book about time paradoxes, billed on the dust jacket of the copy I got through SFBC as the "last word in time machine novels", it probably isn't that bad. However, I sincerely hope that another like it doesn't come down the tube any time soon. It bored me to tears! No doubt Gerrold had fun writing it, and I suppose in a problem solving, how-did-he-get-from-here-to-there frame of mind I could enjoy it somewhat. Not enough by any shade of the imagination, however, to ever think of nominating it for a Hugo. I rate this book worth about a seven at most on the brilliance scale, mostly for his rather good job of not tripping over the "folds" in his time plotting. On the enjoyment scale, I rate it a six, and that's the best I can do for it. Now, if it had been When Harlie Was One that was up for it this year, that would be a horse of an entirely different color. It wasn't. It isn't. Sorry.

Protector, by Larry Niven — As I stated a while back in my introductory letter to SOTWJ, I am a long-standing fan of Larry Niven's Known Space series. He ranks with about two other writers as being just about my favorite writer of hard science fiction. The alien creatures that he has created in his stories and novels over the years have delighted me no end. The stories themselves have been both enjoyable and thought provoking. With this series he has entertained me well. It is with great sorrow, then, that I read in an earlier review of this same book that this will be the last of his stories in the series. Though I can understand his reasons as given there, I am still sorry to see it pass. And I suppose it is partially for that reason that I was as pleased by this story as I was. The plot I won't go into in any detail; Mike Shoemaker covered that pretty well in his earlier review. Nor will I delve into the transition problem between the two halves of the book; Mike pretty well covered that also, and there are definite problems there. I actually had to read that about twice to figure out what had transpired. In spite of that problem and the somewhat shallower characterization than is normal for Niven, I enjoyed the book immensely. Mike didn't, or at least considered it to be boring on the whole. I was well entertained. On the enjoyment scale I would have to give this one a nine, just barely. On the brilliance scale, though, it slips a bit. This one is not so original and thought provoking as some of his others, plus the problems noted earlier. Give it a seven there. Not at all a bad book to end the series with, assuming it has to end. Can't wait to see what he comes up with next.

The People of the Wind, by Poul Anderson — For some reason that I may never figure

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

out, I had completely forgotten that this novel was printed in 1973, and was not even thinking about it as I was beginning to review those books that I thought had a reasonable shot at the Hugo. Fortunately most of the other people didn't, and as a result it was nominated. Which gives me a problem. Until now, in my mind at least, Arthur Clarke's Rendezvous with Rama was riding fairly easily at the top of my list. With the inclusion of this novel in the list to be considered, I just don't know. They're both so good.

The story is one of the best Anderson has ever written in his Future History series, in my estimation. He has always been one of the best in science fiction at writing about alien cultures in a fashion that is both believable and does not unnecessarily ape human beings. The Ythrians are easily the best of those cultures that I have had the pleasure of reading stories about. Other writers have succeeded in writing about alien individuals or small groups as successfully. Others have come fairly close with their larger cultural groups. But in my mind Anderson is at the top. He also, in this book, manages to straddle the fence, portraying the Ythri Domain and its people, both Ythri and human, and the Terran Empire with equal fairness to both, and doing a very fine job of not making the Terran Empire into the evil villain scapegoat as a number of other writers probably would have done. On the individual level, his characterization of the lead and supporting characters, both human and Ythri, was absolutely magnificent. The relationship between the young human male and his female Ythri friend was handled with an incredible delicacy. The story itself stayed within the bounds of the Future History framework while still being highly inventive and terribly enjoyable to read. In short, this is a damned fine novel!

On both scales, I am going to have to rate this one at nine points. Which leads back to the problem with Clarke's book. I'd like to vote for both of them. At this point, I have no idea which I will finally choose. Guess I'll do a mental coin flip, or something. Or, since Rama got the Nebula, maybe I'll vote for this novel so that. . .

The Novels: Afterthoughts and a Choice — As noted above, the TEfL and Rama reviews are both reprints from SOTWJ, written when the nominations were not yet closed. A friend who has read both books and both reviews has brought up a point about the two that leads me to add the following information about the whys and wherefores of my opinions on those two novels. First, I was quite eagerly awaiting good novels from both authors. Additionally, I was aware of, and making allowances for, the writing styles of the two men; and those writing styles are quite different. Clarke writes "idea" stories. What could be called "hard" science fiction. In his stories the people are the vehicles for the development of the idea, and and as such are somewhat "flat" (my friend's term — I enjoyed them, myself, though I will cheerfully admit that they don't have the depth that they might). Heinlein, on the other hand, writes about people, and the story serves to reveal the lead character(s) in depth. Different orientations entirely, but both quite excellent in their own fashions. I waited to read Rama until I was in the proper, receptive frame of mind for a Clarke story. To have have done otherwise would have been unfair to Clarke. I was in a correspondingly suitable frame of mind for TEfL and enjoyed it immensely, in spite of its length, until the ending section. Two sections of that book were absolutely fabulous. Had they been published separately as individual stories (novella length, or so), the "Tale of the Adopted Daughter" and the story of the humanization of Minerva would both have been on my nomination ballot, and the former would have gotten my vote for the Hugo, with no terribly close competition. They were published in a monster book, though, and it is the whole book I am voting on, not sections. The total effect on me of TEfL was not as good as was Rama's.

I am told that David Gerrold has quite a "following" (fan club, some would say). That might explain why his novel was nominated. Hopefully the rest of the SF fans have more sense (or taste) than to vote for it when it comes to the final balloting.

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

Protector was quite enjoyable, as stated, but lacks that extra something for a Hugo win (in my opinion).

Which leaves me in a tossup between Rama and People of the Wind. The more I think about that situation, the more I find myself inclining toward the latter. Its characters are fabulous. Its ideational base is solid, though less of a key element in the sense that it is in Rama. Had Clarke's beaut not won the Nebula, I'd have real problems. All in all, though, I'm going to have to go with The People of the Wind.

THE NOVELLAS:

"The Death of Doctor Island" by Gene Wolfe — This fascinating novella about a satellite out in space to which mental cases are taken who show promise of returning and doing things which might benefit society was the winner of the Nebula award, and after reading it, I can see why. Doctor Island is a computer-dominated therapy island set in world which is the inside surface of a spherical temperglass shell. The spin of the shell keeps the water that the island floats in against the shell, and the island itself is moored to the shell by thick cables. The central character is one Nicholas Kenneth de Vore, who finds himself thrown into this environment, that of a tropical island, in the company of two others. There is a girl named Diane who has an extremely powerful death wish, and a young man named Ignacio who is homicidal and proceeds to beat Nick unmercifully the first time they meet. The story revolves around the process through which Nick gets to know and understand his surroundings, the other two patients, and his relationship to the whole situation. The conclusion, when Nick is given the explanation of what has been happening, incidentally explaining the title, is one which is cause for much thought, on many different levels.

All in all, it is a magnificent story. Disturbing, but then what story that really makes you think is not, in one fashion or another. On the brilliance scale, I would have to rate this story a max nine points; it is that good. On the other hand, it is not the easiest story to get into, and the reading is a bit difficult unless you happen to be in just the right frame of mind. I wasn't, and it consequently took me a bit longer to finish than I would have liked. On the enjoyment scale I am rating this one an eight, primarily because of that reading difficulty I encountered (which I'm fairly sure was my hang-up); but if I were giving half point scalings, I'd give it half a point more. Like all the stories that won the Nebula, it is must reading.

"Death and Designation Among the Asadi" by Michael Bishop — Bishop's novella is about a puzzlingly fascinating alien race on a planet that man, in his push to the stars, is studying; and also about the reactions of the only cultural xenologist who has the courage and/or the insanity to spend an extended period in their midst. Partially because of the style in which Bishop wrote this story (first person as though from various notebook entries, both official and private), it has much greater impact than it would have had written in another form. You literally see the Asadi through the eyes of the unfortunate Egan Chaney, living with him through the roughly 140 days and nights that he remained in the Synesthesia Wild. The effect is disturbing, mystifying and enlightening, all at the same time. I guess it is because Bishop tells us much more about man in this little gem than he does about the Asadi. It seems the bast of science fiction does that, somehow.

This is another of those stories that can only be truly appreciated if you happen to be in the proper mood. I wasn't the first time I tried to read it. I put it down and tried again, and in two fairly concentrated sessions I pushed on through. The problem was one of getting into the character of Chaney. Once I made it, the story was one that I could not put down. Because of the difficulty, though, I have to stick this story with an eight on the enjoyment

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

scale, magnificent though it is. On the brilliancy scale, though, it rates a solid nine points. Choosing the story for which to vote in the novella category shows all the signs of being quite hairy. There are simply too many good stories.

"Chains of the Sea" by Gardner Dozois — Prior to reading this story, I had read but one piece by Gardner — his introduction to A Day in the Life, a highly enjoyable anthology he edited — and had seen him in person once, at the Disclave this past Memorial Day weekend, as part of the most hilarious "writers' panel" I have ever seen. Reading this story caused me to see him again in my mind in all his... fullness, for lack of a better word. He is as delightful to read (at least in what little I've read so far) as he is to listen to when he gets wound into a subject. His story is about the much-talked-about alien invasion of Earth as it takes place some indeterminate time in the future, and about the only person, a small boy, who can see and understand the nature of the aliens and knows what will take place — he is told. A computer network that actually (without man's knowledge) runs the planet is also a focal point of the story, and is marvellously wound into the tale. At times terribly funny in a style I have come to label as being uniquely Gardner, mostly sad in an it-didn't-have-to-happen-but-it's-far-too-late-to-do-anything-about-it fashion. To very badly paraphrase someone, only the eyes of an innocent child can truly see, and this is the story in part of such a child.

It is a beautiful story to read, and entirely deserving of its nomination, which is saying quite a lot, considering the company it finds itself in. On the enjoyability scale, I have to rate this one a nine. It is as fine a story in that sense as I have read. Anywhere. In its deceptively simple fashion, it is also an incredibly brilliant story as well. Give it nine here also. A top-notch piece right in there at the finish line.

"The White Otters of Childhood" by Michael Bishop — When I began the research and reading for this review series, this is one of the two stories that I did not have immediately at hand. I hunted around among various of the people I knew who I thought might have the particular issue of F&SF that this tale appeared in, and of those who subscribed to it, there was unanimous remembrance of the story as a definite standout. That was a rather portentous indication of the story's worth, and it was unusually accurate. It is as totally unlike Bishop's other novella as two stories can possibly be, but it is at least as good, if not better. The story is led off by a quotation attributed to Walter M. Miller, Jr., which I cannot accurately place with any authority, but which sounds like it came from A Canticle for Leibowitz (in one of its incarnations). That quotation set the mood extremely well. One branch of the radiation-scarred remnants of humanity is confined to a small area, a pair of mid-ocean islands, by the Perfects, the other branch of the family, a mutated more-than-human race that occupies the land masses of Earth, doing nothing with them. The resultant society that Bishop creates among the more human group and portrays in this story is an unforgettable one. It is a story of sickness, hatred, revenge and insanity among men. It has a sickening life that rings all too true, and like the other novella of his that was nominated, it says things about human society that are not comforting, but which are all too accurate. As of the present time, I have not found it in any anthology or collection, though that is where I found many of the others. That is a mistake that I hope some publisher soon corrects.

This is another one of those stories that I have to rate as tops, across the board. Nines on both scales. The quality of the nominees in the novella category is incredible, and I, for one, love it. It hurts only that they can't all win. It is as brilliant a piece as I have found. I rate it more enjoyable than his other piece because I did not have to be in a particular pre-existing frame of mind to enjoy it. It reached out and grabbed my attention,

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

converting my frame of mind to fit its telling. Beautiful!

"The Girl Who Was Plugged In" by James Tiptree, Jr. — Until now I had not read much of James Tiptree's work (according to Silverberg that's not too surprising—he hasn't written much), and what I had read I hadn't liked very much. After reading this incredible novella, I decided that the man deserved a second look, so I went back and read several other pieces that I happened to have nearby. Seems that my brain must have been out of gear the previous times that I had read his work. The man is a fantastic writer! There is simply no other way to describe his work. And this little stomach-churning jewel of a novella is no exception. It's a "girl"-meets-the-boy-of-her-dreams story (and vice-versa), the meeting taking place both in spite of and because of the malevolent, money-grubbing communications corporation, GTX. The boy is the son of one of GTX's board members. The "girl" is not what she seems. They do not do the happily-ever-after number. The hows and whys are the meat of this story, and it won't leave you with a cheery afterglow (at least not unless you like having your innards taken out, turned inside out, and then replaced, more or less). In spite of its gruesome plot base (you will never, ever again be able to think of a "waldo" without gagging, unless you're among the aforementioned weirdos), the story is a masterpiece. It reads well, the plot has no loopholes I could find, and Tiptree is either a master technician or did a lot of very detailed homework (or both). It went immediately onto my read-again-at-the-earliest-opportunity shelf. In the front! And it bumped a long line of goodies.

There is no way possible that I can do anything other than rate this story at the nine level on both scales; on both in spite of the fact that the story is not "enjoyable" in the normal sense of the word at all. Rather it is enjoyable in the sense that it reads true and is believable, all too much so. In a very tight race, this one has just stuck itself into the lead. For now.

[Wouldn't It Be a Gas Department — Silverberg says in his introduction to this piece (and other people have confirmed him) that Tiptree is the most anonymous, retiring, self-effacing, downright humble major writer in all of science fiction. Said personage is supposed to operate out of a post office box somewhere in Virginia, even. Anonymous, like. This set me to thinking. Assuming that what Silverberg said was true then and is still true, namely that Tiptree is either one to truly shun publicity, or (and this one is my favorite) is a pseudonym of an already great in this or another field, it would just tickle the daylight out of my funnybone if he turned out to be Harlan Ellison's alter ego, doing penance (for his "sins"), or somesuch. Think about it!]

The Novellas: Afterthoughts and a Choice — I have distinctly mixed feelings about having to make a choice in this category. All five stories are excellent, with so little difference in their quality as to make them virtually indistinguishable on that issue. For me personally in making a choice, the list was pared down by two due to the troubles I had in getting into them. Only by comparison, though. In a less fruitful year for novellas Wolfe's piece and Bishop's Asadi story would have been right in there at the top (and may still do so, as a large enough group of fans may not share my problems with them — wouldn't bother me a bit). Making a choice from the other three is rough, though. And for lack of any other means of making a choice, I simply have to settle back and choose from the gut. And the choice is... "The Girl Who Was Plugged In". By a nose.

THE NOVELETTES:

"The City on the Sand" by George Alec Effinger — This story was the one other piece that I did not have on hand when I began the reviewing process. I went hunting for it at the

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

same time when I was hunting for the Bishop gem. Got the exact opposite response. "Can't remember it" is an approximation of the average answer I received. This did not bode well at all. And for very good reason. When I got through reading it, my immediate response was a baffled "So what?" It was an "all right" story, I suppose, but Hugo quality? Who's kidding whom? And just what was it? I would have very definite qualms about calling it either science fiction or fantasy. It wasn't visibly an extrapolation from any idea that I could recognize. Nor was it fantasy in the sense that Heinlein used the term, meaning a story based in whole or in part on the not-possible-in-the-world-as-we-know-it-or-can-extrapolate-it. It was "possible", all right. But so what? Social commentary? Anyway, forget it, because it isn't worth worrying about as far as I am concerned. I rate this story about four points on both scales. And begrudgingly, at that. I am willing to be shown the error of my ways (would welcome it even—Piglet usually writes stuff so much better than this), but it's going to take some doing. Exceedingly forgettable!

"He Fell Into a Dark Hole" by Jerry Pournelle — This is one of a continuing series of stories that Pournelle is writing about the CoDominium and other groups in the future. I enjoyed it when I read it the first time, and will undoubtedly read it again, someday. It seems that several ships have disappeared on a new starlane, and finally one of the ships that has disappeared is carrying a most important person to the leaders of the CoDominium Navy's Grand Fleet, the very powerful Grand Senator Martin Grant, who almost by himself may make the difference between there being a fleet or not. The theory espoused by one of the fleet's "experts" is that the ships have been pulled out of hyperspace by the gravity well of a black hole. Captain Bart Ramsey, whose wife and son disappeared years earlier on the same starlane, and who is the son-in-law of Grant, is sent to find him accompanied by a skeleton crew and a female physicist who has been imprisoned for unlawful research and who has an idea how the captured ships can be broken out of the black hole's gravity influence. But she won't tell until she gets there. Etc.

As I said earlier, I enjoyed the story. But not enough that I can convince myself that it deserves a Hugo nomination. It certainly was not one of my choices. I give the story an eight on the brilliance scale, primarily because of the original idea Pournelle employed as the escape method. On the enjoyment scale, though, I can only give it a seven. It just does not have the fire and life that I feel a story should have to get into the Hugo range. Sorry, Jerry. (Keep 'em coming, though. I do enjoy 'em.)

"The Deathbird" by Harlan Ellison — Harlan's novelette entry in the Hugo race is a "what if. . ." story carried to its extreme conclusion, in grandiose Ellisonian style; which is to say, excellently. The "what if. . ." goes as follows. What if the "God" that mankind has, for the most part, followed as the one true. . ., etc., in one guise or another, is really an insane, lying, conniving fiend who has been leading man down the path to destruction; while the being we call Satan, the "snake", etc., is really the last member of an ancient race left on Earth to save mankind at long last, no matter what the final cost, if he (it?) can? Harlan takes this concept and makes a masterful story out of it. Written in what Don Wollheim (who has included it in his 1974 best SF anthology) calls a New Wave style, it is nevertheless a very readable and genuinely enjoyable story, assuming, of course, that your head isn't glued to one track. As good as it is, though, for me it lacks something that would take it out of the class of an excellent story and put it into the masterpiece class. Beats me just what it is. Only thing I can think of is that I could not identify with the character of the human "hero" of the story as I have with some of Harlan's other lead characters. That's not usually the case with his stories. I rate this one a nine on the brilliance scale, an eight

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

on the enjoyment scale. Of the three so far, far and away the best. More power to you, Harlan! ('Though God oops! knows you have plenty!)

"Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand" by Vonda N. McIntyre — This novelette, which very understandably won the Nebula in this category, is an incredibly powerful story of a doctor. The woman known as Snake can be called nothing else, for she does indeed practice medicine, though not as we know it. (But what right-thinking western man believed in acupuncture, either?) Her struggles with the fears and prejudices of an edge-of-the-desert-dwelling people and the problems that these cause her as she tries to cure a malignant tumor in a child of these people, a boy named Stavin, gives the basis of the story's power. It is a story of the ignorance of people as much as it is the story of Snake, and the story of how one of the people, a man called Arevin, comes to lose his ignorance through the experience of helping Snake in her struggles.

When I first read this story (back way before I even knew WSFA existed, much less had any ideas about reviewing stories and books for its 'zines) I felt on an intuitive level that it would go far in the awards. It did, for good reasons. On both scales I have to rate this one nine points. I can't find anything wrong with it, and just for the exercise I sat down and tried. The only thing I can perceive that should give it any trouble in winning the Hugo is that it has competition of the most ferocious sort. The contest is going to be close.

"Love Is the Plan, the Plan Is Death" by James Tiptree, Jr. — Meet the other problem (Harlan's piece being the first) that Vonda McIntyre's novelette has in winning the Hugo. This little gem won the Nebula, too. As a short story! Which leads to a question. Just how do the standards of the SFWA and the World Science-Fiction Association differ that this story ends up in two different categories between the two, possibly robbing either itself or Vonda's novelette of the chance of pulling off a double (or both, if Harlan gets it)? The representative of the Discon II committee whom I phoned in much confusion and consternation for clarification of the issue could give me only the following reasons. First, the I-can't-remember-what-he-called-it committee that tabulated for the Hugo nominations and made decisions as to category placements supposedly went by a very strict word-count in making the selections as to category. (Which leads to the question he couldn't answer, namely how did the Nebula people base their classification?) Secondly, he said that the committee reported that to them it read like a novelette, not like a short story. Definition, please. To me it read like a long short story (no contradiction intended), but I would have a murderous time telling you exactly why. I suspect the same problem confronted whatever group was clumping story nominations for the Nebula, and they chose to separate this one from Vonda's story and give both the chance to win well deserved Nebulas. In which case. . ., etc.

The story itself is a masterpiece of a first-person-from-an-alien-point-of-view story. Without telling the entire tale, I can tell you no more about it than that the title is as good a clue to the contents as you can get. You want more, read it. It's beautiful if you like stories about believable aliens, ending with a twist that is delightfully appropriate, and written by a master. I must also give this story nine points on both scales. Which gets us back to the problem. Here's hoping for a tie for first! And a pox on committees!

The Novelettes: Afterthoughts and a Choice — For me, this category contains only three legitimate nominations; and those more than make up for the other two. Of the three, two stand slightly above at the top, on a personal basis only. For me, it is literally a toss-up between the McIntyre and Tiptree stories, and I am forced to fall back on the gut choice again, as on sheer basis I'd have to rate them a flat tie. And, the choice is. . . "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand". By a nose. (Again!)

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

THE SHORT STORIES:

"Wings" by Vonda N. McIntyre — This is an evocative, well written story about the place of outcasts (I think, at least — wouldn't be the first time I've missed the point) in an alien society, and of how two such outcasts relate to each other and their world. I've read it three different times, and no matter how hard I try, I simply cannot get into the story with anything like the same degree of involvement that I was able with Vonda's novelette. Maybe that in its own strange way is a hidden point of the story, that only the outcast can truly appreciate and relate to one another on a totally encompassing emotional level. The problem, I hope, is with me. None the less, I can give the story only eight points on both scales, though somehow I felt it deserves better on both. It deserves to be read, though, and perhaps enough people can find it more to their liking that it will do better in the final polling than I can place it.

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. LeGuin — This is a question story, with a morality message. The question: can you have a "perfect" society, full of pleasure, joy, and worthy achievement at the expense of the needless suffering of even one individual, who is kept in that state of suffering simply for the purpose of providing contrast for the perfection? LeGuin's little question story asks that question, and answers it. The question is one that has been asked many times in many different ways, but few times in so direct a fashion as this. It is a story that everyone should read, without exception. It is a question that everyone should have to answer, with the question put as forcefully to each person as it is in Omelas.

As important as the question is, and as well as the story is written, it lacked something for me that I do not know how to define, and that something was missing in the enjoyment area. It, by its very subject matter, is not a story that is to be enjoyed in the normal fashion, and I understand this and was taking it into account when I sat back after the reading to think about it. I find I have to give it a nine on the enjoyment scale, but just barely. On the brilliance it rates an overwhelmingly solid nine. Must reading of the highest order.

"Construction Shack" by Clifford D. Simak — This is one of the most amusing little stories I have read in some time. It is written in a completely straight fashion, as most if not all of Simak's best work is. An unmanned probe sent out to Pluto shows it to be an almost featureless sphere. The only features that show up through the relatively poor transmission quality are a series of regularly spaced dots. The probe itself, on its way back with photos that would supposedly clear up at least part of the problem of the transmission quality, stops transmitting its homing signal abruptly and is lost. So it is years later, and a manned probe is being sent. Guess what they find. Read it and see, though the title will get you pointed in the right direction, maybe.

This is damned fine SF. One of the best straight pieces I've read in a while. But, in my estimation, it does not stack up that well in comparison to something like Le Guin's story. Enough people liked it that it got nominated. Who knows, I might have nominated it myself had I read it early enough. In my book, though, it's in the same category with Heinlein's Tefl — it makes it to the final nominations because there weren't enough other stories people considered to be better. (Words on that subject later.) I give it an eight on the enjoyment scale, a seven on the brilliance scale. Still and all, a damned fine story. Not to be missed if you can help it.

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

"With Morning Comes Mistfall" by George R. R. Martin — This is another story that I felt when I read it had to go far in the awards. I still feel that way. It's a "why did you have to go and do that?" story. A scientific team comes to Wraithworld to solve once and for all the mystery of the wraiths for which the world is named. In their "scientific" zeal, they totally miss the compelling, evocative beauty of the planet and totally fail to understand or appreciate that without the mystery of the wraiths, Wraithworld has little if anything to offer. Their "victory" in the name of "truth and knowledge" is a loss to all mankind. There are some things that are better left alone, that man can have things to be in wonder of, which may very well be a psychological necessity. There is such a thing as knowing too much.

In my book, this is the cream of the crop in short stories among those nominated. It scores nine easily on both scales, something I didn't think I would see from a Martin piece before this one, as I have not much appreciated his earlier work. Maybe he will also get a deserved second reading. No matter what the result there, though, this is one of the finest stories I have ever read. Period!

The Short Stories: Afterthoughts and a Choice — I would have to consider all four stories in this category quite worthy of the honor. In spite of several weeks to think about them since reading and reviewing them, though, one still stands above the rest for me. "With Morning Comes Mistfall" reached out and grabbed me when I first read it, and none of the others have managed to break the hold, not even LeGuin's masterpiece. By a head, and holding.

EGAD! How The Blazes Did We Miss These Department — The following is a list of tales that somehow managed not to get nominated by the reading fan public (and by myself as well in at least one case) which I feel deserve airing. Mini-reviews, so to speak.

"The Ghost Writer" by George Alec Effinger (in Universe 3, Terry Carr, editor; Random House, thru SFBC) — I heartily agree with Dick Geis (in TAC #9) who said this should definitely make it into the final nominations for the Hugo. It is a superb story about a time in the distant future when all writers do so by being thrust into contact with the ghosts, souls, or whatever of writers of days past. And then there was one who was. . . different. When I read this one (belatedly, alas) I sat back and screamed. Like, I know how I missed it, but how about all the rest of you, huh? I hadn't read Gene Wolfe's story at the time, either, but a whole bunch of other people did, and this little gem was tucked right on the back of it. So what's your excuse, people? (Dreadfully sorry, Piglet. And it's so much better than that novelette of yours that was nominated. Ouch!) Give this one nine on both scales. (And there were only four stories that made the final nominations, too!)

The Cloud Walker, by Edmund Cooper (Ballantine Books) — Without a doubt the best book by Cooper that I have ever read, and he is not a bad writer. The characters are believable, the story and its situation also. The problems encountered in the story are realistic and handled well. A highly entertaining book. I managed to miss reading it until after nomination deadline. Give it eight on both scales.

Trullion: Alastor 2262, by Jack Vance (Ballantine Books) — Maybe the best book that Vance has written, at least among the ones I've read, and those include most if not all of his award winners. I don't know whether it got knocked out by TEfL or The Man Who Folded Himself, etc., or what. No question in my mind that it should have beaten the latter, maybe both. Give it eight for brilliance and nine for enjoyability. Vance can write!

Others will undoubtedly surface later. Especially after I finish digging through my anthologies and collections from '73. For some reason, they always seem to be the

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

last items in my to-be-read stack. If the number of nominations from those sources this year is any indication, that is a situation that will have to change. Soon!

THE HUGOS, A SECOND LOOK — Wayne V. Piatt

I'm not reviewing any novels. You're getting enough about them from other people, here and earlier. I'll review the rest of the nominees.

We have a good selection of meaningful writing to choose from. Aside from one near miss and one flop, all the stories deserve at least two readings. And three writers — Bishop, McIntyre and Tiptree — will have to be watched carefully from now on. They're good, and promise to be better.

THE NOVELLAS:

"Death and Designation Among the Asadi", by Michael Bishop — Writing convincingly of an alien culture is a difficult thing. If the culture is too similar to ours, it doesn't really seem alien, and no mental stimulation occurs. If it is too alien, all sorts of mental stimulation may occur, but without comprehension. This is frustrating and invariably disappoints the reader.

Bishop has described a convincing non-human society. Yet I do not comprehend it so much as I intuitively accept it. And I accept it totally, much impressed with his ability to conceive of such a society, if "society" it is. Such concepts as "society" and "culture" are hard to associate with the Asadi because we have an incomplete picture of them. This incompleteness makes the story difficult to probe, but satisfying in its difficulty. There is a solidity to the whole that indicates the author's care and concentration in creating it. An impressive feat.

"The White Otters of Childhood", by Michael Bishop — Madness. This is an account of madness, love and revenge in humanity's last pitiful stand for survival. One man's madness and all men's madness.

Mankind has tried to destroy itself twice. Twice it has failed, and thereby created a race of men to whom mutation is an everpresent risk at every birthing. The small remnants of man live — or rather, exist — on two small islands. And an evolved group of mankind known as the Perfects rule the rest of the world, but do nothing with it. Both groups have lost the old inner spirit of humanity. The old race succeeded in killing that, at least.

In the midst of this final struggle against extinction is Markcrier Rains. A poet and statesman (among other things), he seems larger than those he lives among — possibly because they seem small, but not totally. And this story is about his ascent into insanity. As he is larger than life, so his madness and quest for revenge is beyond life. And his final plan for revenge is so total, so intensely personal. . .

This is powerful writing. Read it for yourself.

"Chains of the Sea", by Gardner Dozois — Gardner is hitting his stride. This is a well-paced, well-developed story with nothing left out. Complete in one package we have the first alien landing on Man's home planet, the last alien landing on Man's home planet, and the folks who take the planet when we don't need it any more. Nice and Neat. Slightly insane at points, also. Which is appropriate, for this author.

What else is in this package? Let's see — a little old lady schoolteacher who hates her students (didn't you have one of these?), a bunch of computers who run the Earth, a parallel world populated by some fascinating entities. . . Really, it's all in this novella.

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

It's great.

Dozois is dangerous.

"The Girl Who Was Plugged In", by James Tiptree, Jr. — This is a sight-and-sound plugged-in trip into the future. And you can't get more plugged-in than this, either.

Leaving aside the pyrotechnic writing style (which I can't describe adequately) the construction of the story is top-notch. The reader (that's you, punkin) is taken, step-by-step, through a logically developed series of episodes about the heroine. You get right in there with her.

Not that you have any time to notice any of these steps. The above-mentioned writing style of Tiptree takes you through this one too fast to do anything but hang on and experience a life. It slows down just a little at the end. Just enough for you to understand what's happening.

Then, slam. It's over.

Leaving you to wonder how close this future is to today.

"The Death of Doctor Island" by Gene Wolfe — Gene Wolfe has given thought to the inner workings of both the mentally ill and those who seek to cure them, starting with the most novel psychiatric clinic I've ever read of. I'm always fascinated by new ways to break through to the mentally self-isolated and the method in this novella is as exciting as it is bizarre.

I wonder if schizophrenic people could cure themselves reading this? Probably not — but the rational, thoughtful tone gives the impression of a good psychiatrist practicing his art. It had a cathartic effect on this reader, certainly. It left me feeling quite optimistic about the future of mental health, despite the "death" of the title. It was necessary and inevitable, of course. This is a well developed exploration of the human mind, and a very good story.

THE NOVELETTES:

"The City on the Sand" by George Alec Effinger — It's been done before. A lonely man in an alien city (read: France, Africa, the Far East, wherever) struggling with his failure as a human being. Once more we see the meaningless gestures Henry Miller tells us of, and laughs at, as he describes would-be authors, poets and artists in their artificial posturings for some imagined audience.

I'm not saying that Effinger has not tried to say anything in this story; merely that he does not succeed. Its mournful atmosphere seems to hint at deep meaning. But there is nothing there at all. The central character barely manages to come to a vague awareness of his condition. There is nothing here for a serious reader.

And worst of all, it could not be classed as science fiction except for a vaguely described alternate world background. Mr. Effinger is flexing his muscles as he is learning to write. But why publish it?

"The Deathbird" by Harlan Ellison — Ellison says that this work is, in some ways, the bottom line personal statement of all his work. I agree.

He writes of realities that little people cannot tolerate or accept. He delivers blows to the gut and they say, "You didn't have to be so violent." He uses harsh or profane language

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

and some say, "You could have said that more politely." Bullshit. To even attract people's attention nowadays you have to scream. To get their total attention. Some will read "The Deathbird" and say "Wow! That was a good story." Listen again, fools. It wasn't a story.

"Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand" by Vonda N. McIntyre — This is a realistic, insightful story of human beings. And snakes. And Snake.

Snake is a young woman just finding out how stupidly cruel humans are. She is also learning how to accept them despite their cruelty. The interreactions of the snakes and the humans as experienced by Snake allows us to see — to feel, rather — the growth of her emotional maturity and awareness. As with almost all meaningful inner growth, it is accompanied by pain and sadness.

I don't know whether McIntyre meant this to be a directly personal statement or not, but it is. The author is reflected in her work, and I enjoy the story the more for the glimpse of the person behind it.

"He Fell Into a Dark Hole" by Jerry Pournelle — Pournelle has produced a series of old ideas and themes woven together with some good hard science to create a good hard science story. As a science fiction story, it's passable. There is one, and only one character with any depth at all. The other figures are stereotypes added to aid the plot. We have a Great Escape Against All Odds, a heroic man sacrificing himself for the others, and a political prisoner-cum-genius who decides to help the government that ruined her life.

Stock materials. The plot has been built of old wood to display the new idea: speculation on some properties of those stellar objects we call black holes. All the thought that went into contriving a plot around this one core could have been spent writing a longer work in which this would have served as a throwaway idea to add interest and verisimilitude to a larger framework. Now we have one throwaway idea. Pournelle's science columns carry more interest and conviction.

"Love Is the Plan, the Plan Is Death" by James Tiptree, Jr. — I think Tiptree is trying to experience animal instinct for us. I'm not sure how completely he succeeds. I've read this story three times and I'm just not sure.

But it sure as hell is interesting. Each reading was more involving than the one before. It drew me in. Very subjective writing, hence difficult to write about. Not that easy to read, either, but I believe well worth reading.

Damn this man Tiptree! I like his stuff, but I cannot objectively state why. He's a good writer, for sure. When is he going to give us a novel?

"Those Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. LeGuin — What can I say about a writer whose every word, every sentence I completely agree with? I joy at her ideas and her way of presenting those ideas. "Those Who Walk Away from Omelas" is a brief poem in prose form encompassing beauty and ugliness, happiness and sadness, mortality and immortality. If I wax overenthusiastic forgive me; this story causes something to resonate happily within me.

It is often said that you must know evil to appreciate good. In the simplest and most effective terms, LeGuin uses this frame of reference to establish a city — Omelas — which is inhabited by maturely happy people. Their happiness is made possible by their knowledge of the alternatives. Those who cannot be fully happy with this balance, who seek some

THE HUGO NOMINATIONS IN REVIEW (Continued)

further peace, walk away from Omelas.

This is a story you must absorb — not just read.

"Wings" by Vonda N. McIntyre — Another revealing story by this author. I almost feel uncomfortable reviewing — or just writing my impressions of — this story. I'm glad we're getting more women writing in this field, because we need stories like this.

What place does compassion have in a world where survival counts most? McIntyre describes a people who will not help the weak for any reason, where only the strong survive. Most of the race has left the planet, never looking back. Left behind are the weaklings. And yet. . . in these remnants of a race, specifically in the two figures of interest, a new kind of strength just might be appearing. Sympathy, empathy, compassion. And only evident at the end. Could this aid in a new beginning, or is it too late? Judge for yourself.

"With Morning Comes Mistfall" by George R. R. Martin — The "hero" of this story is a planet. Its name is Wraithworld, and George R. R. Martin has described it so vaguely that it's beautiful.

That doesn't sound too clear, does it? Let's say: He hints at landscape, vegetation and atmosphere so subtly that we color the world in our minds to make it more real.

Mist. We all know it, if nowhere else but in pictures. Here: a planet of mist, mysterious trees and ghostly inhabitants. What are the inhabitants? Man has come to search. An allegory, if you will; a search for reality (Mistwraiths — the natives(?) of Wraithworld) shrouded in mystery (the constant mist). Which do you prefer, the beauty of the dream or the plainness of the awakening?

As usual, Man both wins and loses as he discovers Truth.

Martin uses simple statements of simple truths that encompass a great amount of the human situation. A fine story.

"Construction Shack" by Clifford D. Simak — I knew it all along. That was my first reaction to this delightful tale. We see now revealed the true origin of the solar system and I can only marvel that no one guessed it sooner. This is a cosmic rabbit punch by an old pro who just had to let you know.

The format is also old: explorers on a distant planet (in this case our ninth) discover an ancient secret. But Simak sketches life into his personnel and creates a human situation with human reactions. A warm, funny story with impact. Well done.

The Choices — Writing fourteen reviews in four days (including reading each work twice) is a bit wearing. I don't feel up to any in-depth summary of the field. I've been asked to state my preference by category. Here they are:

Best Novella: "The White Otters of Childhood" by Michael Bishop.

Best Novelette: "The Deathbird" by Harlan Ellison.

Best Short Story: "Those Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. LeGuin.

That's it.

BOOK REVIEWS -- SF/Fantasy

Reviewer, JAMES GOLDFRANK

BOK, by Gerry de la Ree, Saddle River, NJ.

The quality of Bok is not in the articles but in the subject matter. Describe Hannes Bok? Try to describe a sunbeam breaking through clouds once in a hundred years. The authors provide some biographical material, but describe him adequately only when they quote him directly. In justice to them, no one could do more. Happily, the book contains much of his correspondence, replete with his reformed spelling, plus nonsense words never once repeated, and always enthusiasm. There are endless drawings and sketches in a style uniquely Bok: a beautiful "Dark-eyed Girl", cherubs, monsters, loveable critters, and always mice, Bok's trademark. There is "Grazdipple Bonk", three poems in transliterated Martian with footnotes and English translation. Two of the three are obscurely Mother Goose. There is "Yeknad Yowleh", a slumber song for a chorus of Venusian cat and frog people.

Hannes Bok was poor in the things this world sets store by. His genius was not widely recognized. He was never adequately paid for his work. He was sometimes shafted by people he thought to be his friends. Yet his joy of living and his whimsy enriched his life far beyond the lives of ordinary men.

Hannes Bok is a man I have come to love through his illustrations, two novels, and two memorial volumes: this one and Emil Petaja's "And Flights of Angels". To read his correspondence, and to see his drawings and paintings is to come to love him.

To a man ten years gone, I say: "Rest, Hannes. God grant you a pleasant and safe journey through worlds no man in this world ever saw as clearly. You have made my life fuller by showing them to me. May you somehow be aware of the love of those who never knew you, who learned to love you through volumes such as this.

City of Wonder, by E. Charles Vivian (Centaur Press, 1973)

This is a fairly well-written imitation Haggard lost race novel from the 1920's. The author and his heroes display the virtues, prejudices, and morality of British gentlemen of that epoch. The novel is predictable, but is the better for displaying no mysticism or pseudo-scientific flummery about its lost race. The description of a non-technological people, living off the heritage of the past, unaware of the origin of that heritage, is well laid out. Their society is virtuous without being religious, ritualized, and stable. An exception to the lack of pseudo-science and mysticism occurs when the author introduces the "ghosts who chase women." He disputes Darwin, explaining how spiritual beings merged with beasts to become Man. The more evil and brutish of these remain semi-materialized in the waste places of the earth, unable to become human, and have a part in this plot. This novel will furnish a few hours of pleasant amusement to nostalgia buffs, who like to remember when there were unexplored lands beyond the horizon, and are prepared to overlook inaccuracies of flora, fauna, and climate.

Reviewer DON D'AMMASSA

All Times Possible, by Gordon Eklund (Daw Books) -- Eklund's fourth novel is the first in which he has maintained firm control of his story, and the results are gratifying. Timothy O'Hara assumes the identity of Tommy Bloome and carries on an unsuccessful assassination attempt against General Norton, fascist dictator of the

BOOKWORLD (continued)

US in a parallel universe. Immediately after his execution, he finds himself in his own past, and resolves to alter history. Bloome eventually succeeds in establishing a communist dictatorship in the US, but tragically assumes all of the repressive methods he deplored. To the very moment of his death, he never recognizes that he has followed the same path as the man he earlier tried to assassinate. Eklund has done a superb job with his characterizations in this novel, concentrating on the personalities involved rather than the actual methods by which they come to power. Definitely recommended.

The Soft Kill, by Colin Free (Berkley Books) -- This is yet another of those tedious novels that pretend to be satirical views of life, but end up overburdened with their own cleverness. Sex, politics, nationalism, the military mind, all get equally short shrift in this occasionally amusing, but far too involved book. I won't call this a novel; the plot is far too nebulous. In shorter lengths, this kind of treatment is often effective. As a full book, it fails to hold the attention.

Books Received -- Reviewers take note!

The Magic Art of Foreseeing the Future, by Daniel Cohen, Archway Paperback #29703, 95¢, published by Pocket Books -- From divination through astrology, numerology, phrenology, palmistry, graphology, dream interpretation into, finally, psychic research the author ranges the total spectrum from total belief to total skepticism ... interesting fare.

Alien Horizons, by William F. Nolan, Pocket Book #77928, 95¢ -- A collection of 19 "purrrrrty good" stories running the gamut of SF.

Future City, ed. by Roger Elwood, Pocket Book #77936, 95¢ -- Anthology on the modern city with 22 original new works: In Praise of New York, by Tom Disch; The Sightseers, by Ben Bova; Meanwhile, We Eliminate, by Andrew J. Offutt; Thine Alabaster Cities Gleam, by Laurence M. Janifer; Culture Lock, by Barry N. Malzberg; The World as Will and Wallpaper, by R. A. Lafferty; Violation, by William F. Nolan; City Lights, City Nights, by K. M. O'Donnell; The Under-city, by Dean R. Koontz; Apartment Hunting, by Harvey and Audrey Bilker; As a Drop, by D. M. Price; Abendlandes, by Virginia Kidd; The Weariest River, by Thomas N. Scortia; Death of a City, by Frank Herbert; Assassins of Air, by George Zebrowski; Getting Across, by Robert Silverberg; In Dark Places, by Joe L. Hensley; Revolution, by Robin Schaeffer; Chicago, by Thomas F. Monteleone; The Most Primitive, by Ray Russell; Hindsight: 480 Seconds, by Harlan Ellison; 5,000,000 A.D., by Miriam Allen de Forde; Foreword by Clifford D. Simak; Afterword by Frederick Pohl.

THE AMATEUR PRESS -- Fanzines, Genzines, Personalzines, etc. (US, UK, et. al.)
(No attempt to review, just a listing of what we've received)

Laughing Osiris -- Reed Andrus, Leo & Rita Borgman, Arthur Metzger, Wayne Perin and Geo. Wagner, Jr.

Zimri 6 -- Lisa J. Conesa

All

Seldon's Plan, Vol. 6, #3, Cy Chauvin

received

Don-O-Saur, Don Thompson

week of

Kosmic City Capers, #3, Jeff May

July 4

(continued)

THE AMATEUR PRESS (continued)

SSF, University of Wisconsin, James Cowan

Gorbett 7, David M. Gorman

Trumpet, No. 11, Tom Reamy, Alex Eisenstein, Ken Keller

Checkpoint 50 -- Narroll Pardue

Superamalgamation #6, Gordon Garb

Photron #10, Steven Beatty

The Stranger #10, John Jensen

Karras 5, Linda E. Bushyager

Moonbroth #2, Dale C. Donaldson

SF Echo #20, Edw. C. Connor

ODDS & ENDS -- Miscellaneous Comments Concerning Material for SOTWJ:
And Other Extraneous Ramblings.

Concerning material submitted; the fact is we've got about as much as we can personally handle through August 15. So this is a discreet and humble plea to hold back any material you, the reader, may have on hand or are preparing to send until that date.

Unlike Don we have neither the stamina or the time permitting to generate the "Son" on even an approximately weekly schedule. The two, or perhaps three double issues that will appear (inclusive of this one) while Don is on vacation represent the total ability to publish by us. This fact is irrevocably tied to the production (finally!) of #80 along with the parallel production of #84.

As far as reactions go on the Hugo Nominations in Review, I would hope that LoC's would be forthcoming, even though some of you may be reading this after the voting deadline has passed.

One final thing. This should fall under the "things we seem to be missing department". Sorely missing of late have been movie reviews appearing with any length or frequency. If someone out there is interested, the material would be more than welcome. (Post August 15th please!)

EN PASSANT: Lettercolumn

DON D'AMMASSA, 19 Angell Dr., E. Providence, RI 02914

(28 June '74)

In #148, David Stever reviews Icerigger after only reading 60 pages. Shame on him. Leaving aside the book itself, it is a gross injustice to an author to read that little of a book before reviewing it. If the book is that unreadable, ignore it altogether. As it happens in the case of Icerigger, the book starts very slowly. But once the refugees have become involved with the planet's native cultures, the book steadily improves and is at least the equal of Anderson's War of the Wingmen.

David Weems' review of Destruction of the Temple left me frankly confused. I cannot see how a book can display "brilliancy", yet be so obscure that the reader is unable to tell whether it is "brilliant" or "confused". Maybe we are being shown a review in the style of the novel examined.