

SWORDPLAY AND SORCERY

by Albert Gechter

THE THONGOR SERIES (Part 2 of 2) (Continued from TWJ #71) --

We next meet Thongor and Ald Turmis in the full-length novel The Wizard of Lemuria, or its revamped version, a "new draft" titled Thongor and the Wizard of Lemuria, which is the same yarn told at somewhat greater length, with a different map included (actually, it's the wrong one for this particular story, and is inserted here by error of the publishers at Berkley; the map used by Ace is the right map), a chronology of Lemurian history and Thongor's adventures (not used in the Ace edition), some different cover-art (by Jeff Jones instead of Gray Morrow), and a new introduction by Lin Carter explaining how he came to write this, his first published novel, after five previous attempts that didn't sell; how L. Sprague de Camp helped him get it into publishable shape; and why a new version of it is now necessary for readers who missed it the first time around. Because of the difference in maps and artwork, real Thongor fans will wish to have both editions in their collections, while casual readers and neo-fans will be satisfied enough for awhile with the Berkley edition.

In this novel, Thongor and Ald Turmis are serving as mercenaries in the army of the Sark of Thurdis, a power-mad, expansionistic tyrant and aggressor. Thongor quarrels with a superior officer over an unpaid racing-debt owed him, resulting in a tavern-brawl and sword-duel. Thongor, having killed the officer, flees for his life in a stolen experimental airship, flying over the prehistoric jungles. After a mid-air battle with a winged reptile, Thongor must make an emergency forced-landing, and is promptly menaced on the ground by still other kinds of dinosaurs. He is, however, aided and befriended by a new acquaintance, Sharajsha, the wise, old Wizard of Lemuria, who (it turns out) needs help from Thongor himself in order to save the lost continent and the human race itself from the threats posed by the Dragon Kings and the dark forces of supernatural evil and Lovecraftian horror from dimensions beyond time and space. To defeat them, Sharajsha must obtain a supply of meteoric iron (very rare and precious stuff!), forge from it a magic sword of power, and use it against these prehuman, evil reptile-men, and Thongor is needed to help him accomplish these things. Along the way, Thongor rescues and falls in love with Princess Sumia of Patanga, and he also rescues and makes friends with stalwart, gallant Karm Karvus of Tsargol. At the end he flies off with them to still other adventures.

The next novel, Thongor of Lemuria (the Ace edition has a map), or its revised and lengthened version Thongor and the Dragon City (the Berkley edition has no map at all, after goofing up on this matter previously), provides us with the promised continuation, along with a glossary of words in the Lemurian language used in the books. In this yarn, Thongor fights jungle beast-men, and a lost city of zombies ruled by a centuries-old vampire, and the yellow druids of Patanga, and the dragon city of Thurdis, one right after the other, and he must repeatedly rescue his beloved Princess Sumia. He is again aided by Ald Turmis, Karm Karvus, and the wizard Sharajsha, as well as by his own prowess and resourcefulness and a secret super-weapon captured in the nick of time from his foes--an electromagnetic force projector, which he mounts on the prow of his stolen airship. This combination proves to be irresistible. Thongor liberates three great city-states, marries Sumia as her royal consort, becomes Sark of Patanga--that is to say, king--and puts friendly rulers on the thrones of Thurdis and Shembis as his vassal sarks, deposing the previous wicked monarchs and exiling the wicked wizard-priests who supported them, and overthrowing the false religion of the evil demon-gods and restoring the true faith of the gods of virtue and light. He is thus able to establish a unified realm with himself as sarkon (or emperor), establish freedom and justice for the people of Lemuria, and found a new imperial dynasty. But other wars are coming, because many of his enemies are still at large, and some of his friends have not yet been suitably rewarded...so we are led on to read the next book.

Lin Carter wrote such a sequel, titled Thongor Against the Gods, and Ace proceeded to "sit" on the manuscript for many months, neither accepting nor rejecting it. Meanwhile, they did buy and use some interplanetary space-fiction by Carter. When he asked them about it, they said they thought there was no particular need for any more sword-and-sorcery yarns (nobody was interested in them--who cared about them, anyway?), and wouldn't he really prefer to write about rocketships and robots and such?--as they probably would buy that sort of material from him instead. Carter then retrieved the manuscript, said he'd cooperate by writing more outer-space yarns for Ace from now on, and sold the unused Thongor manuscript without difficulty to Paperback Library (which was glad to get it and found it quite profitable). Meanwhile, Lin Carter sold other sword-and-sorcery novels (not in this series) to competing publishers and sold only spaceship stories to Ace, thus satisfying everyone.

In the next three novels of the series, Thongor Against the Gods, Thongor and the City of Magicians, and Thongor at the End of Time, Thongor's surviving enemies are conspiring to get revenge and reconquer their lost dominions from him. (The books are fittingly illustrated with cover-art by Frank Frazetta and two more maps at appropriate places. Thongor and the City of Magicians contains an alphabetical directory of the characters in the series, and Thongor at the End of Time has an essay in it, explaining the origin and sources of the series in some of the more obscure parts of Asiatic myths and legends and modern Western occult mystical and theosophical writings.) The villains, as I was saying, try to kidnap Thongor's wife, the Sarkaja Sumia, and he has to chase after them and get her back. Failing in this, they abduct his son, Prince Tharth (nicknamed "Thar"), and he too must be saved. The bad guys then invoke dark powers of supernatural evil against Thongor, and Sharajsha dies and can't help him anymore. But Thongor gets other assistance elsewhere. He builds his own new airfleet that enables him to dominate the skies of Lemuria, and he obtains magic rock-crystals from the Far East that he can use to make disintegrator rays. And he gets some new allies--the Rmoanal, a nomadic race of warlike, blue-skinned giants from the remote Orient--who aid him at his time of need, when he is menaced by the black order of wizard-priests.

It becomes apparent that Thongor and his realm are instruments of the gods of virtue and light, while their opponents are instruments of the demon-gods of darkness and supernatural evil, and that a tremendous cosmic struggle is going on unseen in other dimensions and planes of existence, with the fate of Lemuria, of humanity, and of the planet Earth at stake, and the end not yet in sight. So the evil conspirators try again to murder Thongor, force Sumia to marry one of their henchmen, and get control of Thongor's empire by usurping its throne. Thongor finds himself (in his astral image form) taken out of his normal body and transported miraculously into another world inhabited by the gods, and is given, after various remarkable experiences and spiritual tests, a cosmic vision of Earth's past, present, and future history, down to the end of eternity. He is then brought back to life in his own normal world in the nick of time for a last-minute rescue and another victory over the forces of hell in this continuing titanic conflict. By this time, Thongor's empire includes five city-states and three vassal sarks.

Berkley, having outbid Paperback Library, will publish the next volume, already-written, titled Thongor Fights the Pirates of Tarakus. And Lin Carter has said that he is planning another story called Tharth, Son of Thongor, and is writing a series about Atlantis for Dell Books. Meanwhile he has written for Lancer a book about King Kull in collaboration with the late Robert E. Howard, containing previously-published stories by Howard about that character (similar to Conan and Thongor), and new stories from posthumous manuscripts by Howard, and still other stories newly-written by Carter. Carter has similarly engaged in collaboration with Howard, de Camp, and Bjorn Nyberg in continuing and amplifying Howard's series about Conan; and he has written still other sword-and-sorcery novels, not in series, for Belmont, Tower, and Signet; but he writes space-operas for Ace as well, thus defying any attempt to "type-cast" him; and he sometimes does a "straight" and serious "hard-science"

story, or a humorous spoof, for the magazines and paperback anthologies, demonstrating his versatility. He has also become an "editorial consultant" (in effect, the editor) of Ballantine's Adult Fantasy Series. So the best is probably yet to come from this very promising young author.

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CONCERNING TRUE SCIENCE FICTION BY EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
by Bert Trotter

Aside from the Moon series and Caspak trilogy, most of Burroughs' scientific adventures fall into the category of science-fantasy. However, Burroughs did write two novels that had all the aspects and plot formation of the science fiction story. While both had the standard Burroughs' theme of hero-rescues- maiden, I was still able to notice a certain amount of practical scientific and political application and freshness of style. For any fan who has not read either, here is a brief summary.

Burroughs produced a future-history yarn in 1913, entitled Beyond Thirty (The Lost Continent in the Ace edition), in which the New World is cut off completely from the Old in a policy of total isolation to escape from Europe's violence. The Pan-American Federation prospers 200 years until 2137. The hero, Jefferson Turk, decides it would be best to land beyond the forbidden longitude thirty if he is to save his damaged fleet. He finds that Europe has gone back to a sort of African barbarism. He comes into contact with the Abyssinian Empire, but disapproves of their expansionist philosophy. He escapes with a barbarian queen to the ever-expanding Chinese Empire. Contact is reopened between hemispheres and a new era of global cooperation dawns. Beyond Thirty stands as a work of prediction in the front rank of speculative literature concerning future world political developments.

Edgar Rice Burroughs left a 25-year gap between another work, The Moon Men, and his final work. His last hero is involved in Burroughs' only extra-solar novel, Beyond the Farthest Star, a story slanted towards World War II. Dubbed Tangor on his arrival through telepartition (shades of John Carter!), Tangor finds that Palooda is in the midst of a century-old war between Unis and Kapara. Tangor finds Unis a well-organized, socially-oriented culture fighting an unglorious war with the inferior Kaparans. After being accepted in Unis, he goes on a number of battles and spy missions in which he steals plans for a spaceship for a massive movement of population by Unis to escape war. Burroughs fails to end his story but it still finds its way to among his best.

One thing in both of his stories, I think, causes an interesting contrast. The message Edgar Rice Burroughs is trying to get across to modern-day readers is the true horror of war. In Beyond Thirty he brought out the inevitable result of mechanized warfare, the nuclear war of his day. In Beyond the Farthest Star, he pointed out the long-term effects of controlled war, a very possible outcome in today's Cold War. As of late, some fans criticize Edgar Rice Burroughs as a creator of outmoded fantasy and fairy tales. In conclusion, I cannot agree, because I find maturity in theme in both of these stories that is unique in Burroughs' writing.

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MINIREVIEW -- The Haunting of Alan Mais, by Peter Saxon (Berkley Medallion Book; 60¢; 143 pp.).

This is the third book in the Guardians series, and it's worth reading. Saxon combines the ideas of reincarnation, possession, haunted houses and poltergeists in an interesting and enjoyable manner, and not once will you get the idea you have read something like this before. ##### It's original. It's different. Saxon weaves an eerie and powerful tale about a haunted house and the words, whispered in the darkness, "Help me". ##### Gripped in the spell of its potent scenes and well thought-out plotting, I thought Haunting one of the finest books I'd read in a long time. I still do. ##### By all means, buy it.

-- Richard Rieve

THE INKWORKS
by Kim Weston

GREEN LANTERN #'s 76-81, April-December, 1970. National Comics. Scripts by Denny O'Neil, art by Neal Adams and various inkers.

The GREEN LANTERN comic was due to be cancelled sometime around issue #75 or so because of falling circulation and possibly other reasons, perhaps including the fact that the super-hero fad is dying anyway. However, it would seem that someone up at DC likes Green Lantern and wanted to save him. Someone also perhaps took a liking to the revamped Green Arrow character (Oliver (GA) Queen lost his fortune to unscrupulous businessmen and acquired a "liberal" social conscience) and decided to send the two of them on a search for truth, a search for the real America, and to try to save the book with a new writer and a new artist. I've been reading GL since his first appearance in Showcase back in 1959, and there's been a lot of good stuff in the comic, so I kinda wish them luck.

To briefly summarize the first story in the new series, GL is in Star City looking up GA when he sees some punk attacking a respectable businessman-type and rescues the latter, who turns out to be the slumlord for the punk's tenement and who intends to turn said tenement into a parking lot. The residents start hurling garbage, etc. down on GL and the slumlord, Jubal Slade. GL decides to teach them a lesson but GA turns up and sides with the "anarchists". GA turns out to be our friendly neighborhood "bleeding heart" and takes GL on a "guided tour of how the other half lives". In the process GA browbeats GL into changing his philosophy with the help of an elderly black. "In the time it takes to draw a single breath...the span of a heartbeat--a man looks into his own soul, and his life changes." GL tries appealing to Slade's conscience on behalf of the tenants, but Slade has no conscience. In the process of roughing up Slade, GL is recalled by those who gave him his powers, the (blue-skinned) Guardians of the Universe, for his "emotional attack on his brother earthling" and is sent on a "useless mission" to cool off. Recalling the words of the old black, he decides "NUTS! I've HAD the 'Blue Skins'" high and mighty order giving...I'm going where I'm NEEDED." Meanwhile, GA is appealing to Slade's greed (turns out Slade has underworld activities he's worried about). GA arranges for a \$25,000 payment to himself. Slade arranges for GA to be assassinated instead (as expected) and eventually Slade is shown for the rat he is and hauled in for attempted murder and possibly other things.

Epilogue: The all-powerful Guardians of the Universe are angry with GL for his insubordination. GL is about to apologize (and he was at least partly in the wrong) when GA breaks in: "That's right LANTERN...APOLOGIZE! GROVEL in front of that walking mummy", and browbeats the Guardians into finally sending one of their number to come to Earth disguised as an Earth mortal. In a green pickup truck, "the three set out together, moving through cities and villages and the majesty of the wilderness...searching for a special kind of truth...searching for themselves..." The story may be better than my retelling, and it is a good story, but it does have serious flaws.

When GL rescues Slade, someone calls out, "Hey--SUPER-HERO!", to which he replies, "There's no need to thank me, people! I was just doing my duty..." No wonder they started pelting him with garbage, for a remark like that! And the Green Lantern I've been reading about for 10 1/2 years would know better; it is totally out of character. Denny O'Neil has suddenly made Green Lantern stupid.

And the words of the old black: "I been readin' about you...How you work for the BLUE SKINS...and how on a planet someplace you helped out the ORANGE SKINS...and you done considerable for the PURPLE SKINS! Only there's SKINS you never bothered with--!...the BLACK skins! I want to know...HCW COME?! Answer me

THAT, Mr. GREEN LANTERN!" GL replies, "I...can't..." Here again Denny O'Neil has put words into GL's mouth that are out of character. That is not the same GL who has been around these past years. The GL I know was truly skin-color-blind. The color of a being's skin makes no difference as to whether or not he needs help, and one is sure that GL has been helping blacks in the past years just as he helps any other who needs help. But you don't read about it in comics very much because of comic book company policy up until quite recently (and probably because of the policy of the Comics Code Authority). There have finally been breaks in recent years; I expect to see more, and I think it is a good thing. But even today, in most comics the Negro is still effectively "The Invisible Man".

Part of GL's oath contains the phrase "No evil shall escape my sight." GL goes off quite concerned about "Evil...all around me...disguised as familiar, everyday persons and places!" No, GL hasn't been overlooking evil--injustice perhaps, but there is a difference between the two.

Another thing, which someone else has already pointed out, is that if Slade had not been involved in the other un-named underworld activities, GL and GA would have been unable to do anything to him, leaving the primary problem of the tenants' being kicked out of the rat-trap into the street unsolved. As is, what happens to them with Slade in jail?

I think the most serious fault of the story is that Green Arrow is condoning, almost advocating, by his rhetoric, the idea that if someone else inflicts a real or perceived injustice or wrong on me, there is nothing wrong with my doing more of same. In the Epilogue, GA says something about a "hideous moral cancer that is rotting our VERY SOULS!" Some people believe in this idea. I don't. But if anything comes close to it, I think it is this idea that the wrongs of another excuse my own wrongs. Green Arrow, like many others, and probably without being aware of it, is infected with and helping to spread the very cancer he is decrying. And he is in the process, here, of infecting Green Lantern.

In the second new GL-GA issue, our little trio, GL, GA, and the Guardian, take a "Journey to Desolation", "In the heart of America--a War Zone". The story is passable, but hardly outstanding. It lacks some of the faults of the first story (but has others to more than make up for them), but it also lacks some of the good points. The cover tends to imply that the gun-totin', reactionary, silent-majority, middle American bigot-types are about to lynch our heroes. In reality, the villain is Slapper Sloane, who owns a coal (I presume) mine and a small town, who lives in a fortress surrounded by barracades, anti-tank traps, watch-towers, barbed wire and minefields, and who keeps the townspeople in virtual slavery with a gang of former Nazi war-criminals who can't seem to shake the "Jawohl mine Fuerher" habit. Sound cliché-ridden? That's not all. Slapper is also having one of the miners start a rebellion against him so he can kill off a few of them as an example so the rest ~~of the sheep~~ will behave. And he is going to execute an idealistic young folk singer who he fears may move on and spread word of his little slave-based kingdom. Some of the dialogue must be seen to be believed, and some of the skips in logic seem more like chasms. All this is "relevant", all this is propaganda, all this is enough to make me barf. Denny O'Neil has written some very good stories. This is not one of them. I think he was so busy writing "relevant" propaganda that he forgot what a good story is. Steve Ditko had a spell of writing and drawing propaganda a while ago, and although he didn't forget what a good story is, his stories were also definitely flawed. I enjoyed his more. Perhaps this is because I too am a ~~gun-totin'~~ reactionary, silent-majority, middle American bigot. Or maybe Ditko is a little more skillful and didn't stray quite as far from good storytelling.

In issue #78, Black Canary, a costumed heroine, meets up with four greasy motorsexual homocyclists who want to take her bike. She proceeds to give them a

royal trouncing until one of them runs her down from the rear with another bike. The four depart and BC's broken body is retrieved by a shadowy figure.

Our heroes walk into an eatery on an Indian reservation, and who else should walk in but our four friends, the "Demons", who start to rough up the owner. Again they are trounced. GA notices that one of the bikes is the one that belonged to Black Canary, and he almost kills the cyclist, who tells him how he got it. GA and GL find BC as a member of a "family" headed by a Bible-pounding bigot who is styled somewhat after Charles Manson. "Joshua" has a band of hypnotized followers and is going to help wipe out "the red man...the black man...the yellow man..." as per the history of this nation. There are a few bits of awful dialogue, and Green Arrow demonstrates that he is infected with the "hideous moral cancer" spoken of in issue #76 (the cancer as interpreted by this reviewer), but on the whole the story is fairly good, fairly well told, a great improvement over the previous issue, and it does have a number of very well done pages.

In GREEN LANTERN #79, Indians are the "relevant" problem. A logger and the local loggers union head are trying to steal some valuable timber land from the Indians, who are the rightful owners. Since it fits the story, GL gives evidence that he still has the ability to reason and tells Green Arrow, "I'm getting a bit tired of your lording over me...with your MORAL SUPERIORITY routine...If you want to break the law--go AHEAD! But count me OUT!" He then proceeds to try to help out the Indians by tracking down the last copy of the deed to the land (two others have mysteriously disappeared), and he finally gets a U.S. Representative to help out. Meanwhile, our friendly neighborhood rabble-rouser and hot head--Green Arrow--proceeds to rouse the rabble and resort to violent means. The reader wonders where GL left his brains as he overlooks obvious clues left by the author (possibly his head is too full of the author's propaganda). Overall, the story is good. It has flaws, the most harmful being the over-emphasis on propaganda, and cliches (used to make room for the propaganda). The story could have been better if O'Neil had stuck to story-telling (or story-telling with a definite point or moral), but instead he is weighting the story down with his own "moral superiority". Perhaps if he were more skillful he could do a better job even of this, but as of now he is still a bit heavy-handed.

As far as heavy-handed propaganda goes, issue 80 reaches a nadir I had hoped would not be possible after issue 77. This story is not as bad as "Journey to Desolation". Actually, I may be a little harsh on this issue, but I think not. Considered by itself, in a vacuum, the story is not too bad--much of it is indeed story-telling with a point rather than creating a story as a place to hang propaganda, but it cannot be so considered. The propaganda is not as thick (though it is still there starting with page 10 or so) as in others, except by implication. The insane judge is obviously Julius Hoffman, and the "Conspiracy Trio" are obviously the "Chicago 8"--considered in that light, the story must be judged one of the low points of these six issues.

The final issue to date is concerned with Population Explosion. There is less out-and-out propaganda in this issue than in the others, and the story is okay, although the ending seems to condone mob violence since GL could have stopped the mob, even though it is only completing what he was planning to do himself. Still, it is preferred even in our system that those whose duty it is to uphold and execute the law tend to the dispensing of "justice" rather than vigilantes and lynch mobs. This story, like the previous one, takes place on an alien planet, possibly because population explosion is too real an issue to be handled on Earth in a comic approved by the Comics Code Authority. A nice touch is added in the final scene of the story, though, as Green Arrow and Black Canary are shown in a street scene against a very crowded background, the implication being that we on Earth also have population problems.

In the lettercolumn, one of the letters comments unfavorably on the "new" Green Lantern. "To say that his (O'Neil's) writing is unsubtle would be the sublimist of understatements...Surely Green Lantern deserves a better fate than to be made the tool of an ideological extremist. Just as I would not have William Buckley write Green Lantern, so too do I object to Mr. O'Neil's opinionated, fustian rhetoric." He also comments that he hopes that although there is bound to be some "blythe praise" that the comics have finally gotten involved with the issues of the day, it will be in the minority, for with such degrading of a character even the most loyal fan will eventually stop buying. The editor replies that the "blythe praise" faction is well over 90% and that the "old" GL was losing money. However, he does not add that the "new" GL is still losing money, but being kept because it brings the company a tremendous amount of favorable publicity and prestige.

An article on the ratings of the new TV shows noted that this year's so-called "relevant" shows aren't doing so well in the ratings. Perhaps this is because the people who didn't watch the old shows, partially because they were irrelevant, don't watch the new shows because they can see that the new ones aren't really relevant either, although they make a play at it. Or perhaps they just have better things to do than watch TV.

There are those who object to comic books getting involved with the real world. I don't. I think perhaps the idea behind the new Green Lantern is good and I wish it success. But I do hope that the writer will be a little more subtle and less obviously propaganda-oriented. I think there is a valid place for comics that are "involved", but so far this one had been rather poorly done, not in terms of artwork (which has been very fine indeed), but in terms of scripts and the heavy-handed emphasis on propaganda instead of high-quality story-telling.

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MARGINALIA: Book Reviews
by David A. Halterman

If Animal Farm can be called fantasy, then The Butterfly Revolution (William Butler, Ballantine Walden Edition, 01772, @95¢) is at least borderline science fiction. It extrapolates the Youth Rebellion into a boy's camp, ferments it into a coup, and sets up a complete totalitarian regime, complete with propagandists, political prisoners, and counterrevolutionaries. The book is terrifyingly realistic, and gives the weird feeling that it really could happen. In all, the book is almost a perfect parallel to Orwell's little masterpiece, clear up to the final climactic confrontation with the police.

And like Animal Farm, the pigs win, again.

A semi-stfnal offering called Choice Cuts (Pierre Boileau & Thomas Narcejac, translated by Brian Rawson, Bantam #S3758, @75¢) has been imported from France, and is getting a major buildup, with a movie in the offing. The basic idea of the story is not overly original, and the twists are basically a matter of compounding the felony. A murderer is executed, and his parts are transferred, in toto, to a number of recipients. Then, one by one, the recipients seem to discover that the personality of the part is greater than the whole. Except for the person who received the head, everyone's mind seems to become--twisted. One by one, they die. One by one, the parts are joined to one another. Then....

The predictability is somewhat as expected, but the book has its surprises. The writing--or translating--is quite good, and leads one to suspect that French fandom has a reason for being.

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EN PASSANT: More Letters

W.G. Bliss, 422 Wilmot, Chillicothe, Ill., 61523.

(27 Nov 70)

(Re TNJ#72) Happy Days In Outer Space: Sounds kind of utopian--and logically why not? The computers could deal with disturbing influences such as visiting Earthmen.

Roasted Alive For Fun and Profit: Anybody know if there have been any experiments on determining longevity in the total absence of ionizing radiation? (A rather tall order, as cosmic rays tend to zap right on through anything.) Vardeman indirectly brings out how insufficient current science and technology is. It is very educational to delve back through literature and note how that has colored thinking in the past. Early automobile drivers were advised when a collision with a train was inevitable to swerve the auto at the last moment so that the impact would be a glancing blow which would possibly be less damaging. Vehicles of the Air (1908) held forth on areoplane safety, and seriously considered that since aircraft were inherently light, the effects of stopping suddenly were less serious than for a big heavy railway car.

For a long time, for decades (who knows--somebody may still be at it), the quest for an electronic amplifier was for a device that did not require continuous expenditure of energy just to keep in a working state. Nope--it wasn't transistors (remember back when they were called amplifying crystals before Bell Telephone Laboratories invented them?)--but a dream that still would be excellent if made into reality. An electron emitter for a vacuum tube that would operate at ambient (room) temperatures. Of course, the idea fit contemporary electronics like a glove. Photoemission works at room temperature, but obviously uses maintaining energy. A sharp needle point works at any temperature, and was one of the first electron emitters (like on lightning rods), but unholy voltage gradients are necessary.

Essentially, electronic amplifiers have been basically the same since the first mechanical telephone amplifiers and the first gas thermionic tubes used by the Germans for telephone amplifiers. They all are a two-part system. Part one is the so-called amplifier, which is an oversimplification because that device makes what it is connected to amplify. The next step up in electronic technology is to combine the function in a single element. Of course, there may be no way to combine a two-element amplifier into a mono amp--a different idea might be needed for something to do that. Since the current level of science (excluding crackpot science, naturally) is no great shakes for extrapolating sf beyond a couple of centuries or so, I'm working on improving it.

Harry Warner, Jr. & Herr Von Strausse: Once I faunched for and craved "The Death and Transfiguration Suite". Time passed, and somehow it lost something and got left on the shelf. I've spun it on the turntable a few times in later years, and find it abominable. I no longer find anything of that Strauss even tolerable--it all sounds like musical awkward tedium. It's probably that I've gotten too choosy. "Lakme" had the same effect--except that I always failed to dig it until I found an old Victor 78 of a bit of it, which I now dig above all other longhair. Now, I wonder, did anybody ever record an acceptable Strauss?

Noise Pollution: One solution is the "space age" high-fidelity earphones that have become popular. They wouldn't quite work out in a car or truck, though, as the user probably wouldn't hear a Volkswagon peeping.

By golly, it could be Sandra Miesel turned up something of use in our time with her account of the Chinese' useful recovery of chemicals from urine. In practice it could lead to free beer everywhere--taverns would get their profit from the plumbing.

P.S. I subscribed to the 'zine of biological fandom, and the Oct. ish of THE WORM RUNNER'S DIGEST arrived today. If it was noted or reviewed around sf fandom, it was ages ago. Address: Planarian Press, Inc., P.O. Box 644, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48107. (\$2.00 per issue.)

Jerry Lapidus, 54 Clearview Drive, Pittsford, N.Y., 14534. (19 Dec '70)

(Re TWJ #72) Well, let's see. No knowledge of Miss Du Maurier, nor any of THRILL BOOK. Both informative, undoubtedly, but, uh.....

Harry, however, is most interesting, for despite my familiarity with some areas of "classical" music, I know very little about either of the Strauss people. I welcome his comments on the sf nature of this music, which only really serves to point out that it was the most appropriate possible choice Kubrick could have made. I'm still under the impression that this same extreme care was taken with every aspect of the film, that everything in that film was chosen and deliberate. We may come to know for certain, as more and more of those expert in each individual field (as Harry is here with music) begin to discuss the film in detail and retrospect. The wave of review and controversy is over now; now is the time to begin contemplating the film in detail, and discussing its effect on the sf field in its entirety.

Have not yet read The Island Under the Earth...

Would it be out of place to say that Damnati on Alley is proof positive of Zelazny's writing ability--the production of an engrossing, intensely readable novel despite the total lack of characterization, scientific basis, or interesting plot?

-- Ted's review of Thorns is welcome, if a little bit late, as was his commentary on Masks of Time. Particularly in a critic of Ted's ability, I would think it would be so much more valuable to consider these works in some sort of chronological order, demonstrating the author's ongoing development as a mature science fiction writer. This novel is significant now, yes, but even more significant in that it was published before Masks of Time, before Nightwings, before To Live Again and Man in the Maze, and just after Hawksbill Station. In a writer developing from consummate hack to one of the top working writers in the field, this progression is especially important, and certainly the novel should be considered in this light in addition to its individual merits.

Funny--I'm amazed to learn that Ted, who generally does like Harlan's work, didn't like "Repent, Harlequin" at all, whereas I think most people would consider it one of his best stories. Harlan displayed a strong sense of humor in this particular outing--a sense he rarely employs in his otherwise serious stories, and for me, the addition is a major plus to an already fine story. Very strange that Ted should be so down upon it.

I'm surprised at the brevity of the review of The Year of the Quiet Sun. Even with its flaws, the novel in question is certainly one of the best dozen novels of the year; and deserves far more in the way of time and trouble than this simple plot summary. Tucker deserves credit for superb extrapolation of the near future, and at the same time criticism for his decision to make Chaney's "real" nature a major plot twist. But the book certainly deserves at least attention--much more than it got here.

Most welcome new addition to the WSFA set-up is Richard Delap's prozine review column. With Tony Lewis no longer working for LOCUS, there really isn't a single regular prozine reviewer I can think of, and it's a shame to have to wait until end-of-the-year summaries before one is able to get any commentary at all about the short fiction being published in the magazines. I've read very little magazine fiction this year myself, and so welcome these reviews as at least a partial guide of what and what not to read.

Perry A. Chapdelaine, Franklin, Tenn.

(25 Dec '70)

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #41 by Dick Geis indicates he doesn't intend to permit me to answer either his unfortunate attack against Robert Moore Williams, or several other personalities mentioned in his SFR 40. It would appreciate it, therefore, if you would use the following material in WSFA JOURNAL. (Everyone ought to have an opportunity to defend themselves, hadn't they?) --

Your comments, Dick, on Bob Williams' Love Is Forever--We Are For Tonight were nasty and uncalled for. I think it's the best SF novel I've read this year, and certainly more science-based than, say, "A Boy and His Dog"--or a dozen others that could be named--and the message is more real, more palatable.

As science, Bob's psychology of the mind and what goes on therein, is certainly more accurate than the occasional crap that's called SF and is therefore eligible for nominations. Furthermore, it's accurate, consistent stream-of-consciousness material, and reflects several layers of symbolic meaning--fulfilling, therefore, the good literature award of merit.

It's not linear in nature--or, at best, it's cyclical, weaving the reader around and around, and up and down, just like gnats, but through meaning levels, and across time strips.

The wording, as you'll see from Piers Anthony's report, is not hack stuff, but beautiful symbolic allusions fit for the best of Orbit.

All these things, and more, make Love Is Forever--We Are For Tonight my choice for next year's Hugo and Nebula awards.

Now as far as it being not eligible for the award because it's autobiographical--well--you only have Robert Moore William's word for that, and everyone knows what a liar he is. Or mine, and I could only verify a tiny portion of it, if I would, and I won't.

The publisher didn't call it an autobiography, did he? And I've heard Norman Spinrad define science fiction as anything that is called science fiction--an accurate statement, indeed.

Very well, then. It's eligible because the publisher labeled it SF, because it's content is simply as SF-ish as many works that are nominated, because it is good literature, and because nobody should believe either Robert Moore Williams or his surrogate, Perry A. Chapdelaine.

My nomination for Hugo and Nebula awards stands!

((Perry then goes on to direct comments to Walter Breen, Don Thompson, and Virginia Kidd, apparently in response to material by them which appeared in SFR #40. Lack of space prevents our publishing his comments here, but, as they are largely of a nature enabling them to be of wide interest even to readers unfamiliar with the SFR #40 material, we will print them in TWJ #75 and/or the Supplement(s) thereto. (This is as Perry himself suggested.) --ed.))

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This Supplement will be distributed to all subscribers to TWJ and/or SOTWJ, and to others as far as remaining copies go. If any copies then remain, they will sell for 20¢ ea. ### Next Supplement will be TWJ-75-1.

-- DLM

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