

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Edited and
Published by
ROBERT W. FRANSON

FEBRUARY 17, 1964

NUMBER 13

THE ORIGINS OF BOOKS

by Andre Norton

Books are born, as far as I am concerned, in two ways. One is from a vivid scene-picture which pops into one's head out of nowhere. This will spark a series of other ideas until one has the beginning of a plot in mind, and then the difficult work of fashioning that into a book begins.

The other comes from some note one may pick up in wide reading, which continues to haunt one until some more research is done, and a story grows from the seed. For example—STAR RANGERS grew for me out of a passage I came across concerning a Roman Emperor, who, for a drunken whim, ordered a legion to march east to the rim of the world—the legion, obeying, was never heard of again. Speculation as to where the unfortunate men came to their final end grew into a transplanting of such a march to the future of a stellar empire.

Other times a story, or part of story, which will not work out in the form first attempted, can be used to better advantage elsewhere. The Verlaine section of WITCH WORLD was first put on paper years ago as part of a tale about the Crusading Barons of Outremer. But, never written as I first intended, it fitted in well for the adventures of Loyse in the fan-

tasy volume.

Wondering "what if" is a good springboard for s-f writing. SIOUX SPACEMAN came from a book on the Plains Indians wherein it was stated that the Spanish advance in the Southwest was definitely defeated, and the European occupation west of the Mississippi deferred for more than a century, because the Plains tribes were able to adopt and use the horse to such advantage for their raiding warfare. So—what if the horse (or some other Terran animal) would play the same part on an alien world? As you see, the possibilities of "what if" are endless.

Once the idea is born, then the real drudgery begins. Research—which means reading from a dozen to a hundred books (depending on the complexity of the background needed), picking up a scrap here and one there to be woven in (altered, of course, to fit alien scenes), is very necessary. I use anthropology, archaeology, natural history, folklore, native magic, and travel books for my sources. Then, one begins with an outline, but does not stay with it. Characters take on their own life and begin acting independently, so you seldom finish the way you had first intended.

It is a complicated process, but it is one you enjoy even while you are sweating over pounding out the pages. You work

(continued on page two)

SFR STORY RATINGS

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

NOVELS
(40,000+ words)

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

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

THE ORIGINS OF BOOKS (continued from page one)

with one compelling yard-stick—that what you are producing is the best you can make with the idea, the research, and the labor of the moment. There is no denying that some ideas are better than others, or that some unite with the author's emotions and work to make a better book. But—each book is THE best possible—the writer puts into idea and work all that can be given—or else he is only going through the motions of writing. And any reader can detect that false note.

—Andre Norton

CORRECTION: THE PRODIGAL SUN, reviewed in SFR #12, is by Philip E. High, not by Philip K. Dick.

WAY OUT, ed. by Ivan Howard.
Belmont, N.Y. L92-575, 1963.
166 pp. 50¢

Although the title states that this anthology is "way out," only two of the stories actually fit in this category. The two best stories are "Honorable Enemies," by Poul Anderson (d), and "'X' for 'Expendable'," by William C. Balley (F). The other ratings are one "e" and three "f's." Although the stories are claimed to be new and "never before published," some if not all are reprints.

—Robert Merryman

THE TWISTED MEN, by A.E. van Vogt.

ONE OF OUR ASTEROIDS IS MISSING, by Calvin M. Knox. Ace, N.Y. F-253, 1964. 130 & 124 pp. 40¢

This Ace Double is a good buy. The first half is a collection of three stories from 1949-51. "The Twisted Men" is about a starship that comes back to Earth just before Sol is due to go nova, but the crew of the ship is unaware of what's happening (E). The other stories are "The Star-Saint" (E) and "The Earth Killers" (again E).

Knox's half is a novel about a man who files a claim for an asteroid, but the claim is not recorded by the master computer because someone else wants that asteroid—and not for its radioactive ores. NOVEL - 6

—The Editor

ADVERTISEMENTS

Science fiction subjects only.
Rates: 5¢/word, minimum ad \$1.

For information about the Pacific Science Fiction Association, write to the Secretary, Bill Pond, 4849 49th Street, San Diego, California 92115.

Back issues of SFR are only ten cents apiece. If you like, mention which ones you want when you renew, and they will be deducted from your future issues.

MAGAZINE REVIEWS by Dean M. Sandin

Serials are not rated until the review of the final installment.

New Worlds, January, 1964. 128 pp.
3/- (42¢)

The third installment of Colin Kapp's "The Dark Mind" is the smashing conclusion to an excellent novel. It deals with the seemingly unlimited power and life-force of the "dark side" of Ivan Dalroi's brain. Dalroi, a private investigator, is waging a one-man vendetta against Failway Terminal. Failway, more powerful than the government, is an amoral enterprise that controls various parallel worlds for its own uses. The question of what Dalroi's mind is, the answer to which is not revealed until the ending, haunts Dalroi and his enemies, who crop up everywhere—and who continually attempt to kill him because of the threat his mind poses to them. But he can't be killed, it appears, on account of the intense survival-instinct of his incredible brain. The author, in showing step by step Dalroi's capabilities and how much he can withstand, creates an atmosphere of increasing power, making the story's outcome all the more fitting. "The Dark Mind"'s ideas and their handling form one of the most gripping science fiction novels ever written.

NOVEL - 3

It is very unfortunate that New Worlds is due to fold after two more issues—its sister-magazine, Science Fantasy, is being discontinued as well—especially since it can publish such welcome material as its latest serial.

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

"The Lords of Quarmall," by Fritz Leiber and Harry Fischer, concludes here with its second part. It is light adventure-fantasy, belonging to Leiber's Gray Mouser series. The story is of the power-struggle between two princes of the subterranean kingdom of Quarmall. The Gray Mouser and his companion, Fafhrd, are on opposite sides of the feud without knowing it, in this novella.

If, March, 1964. 130 pp. 40¢
(2/10)

Poul Anderson's two-part serial, "Three Worlds to Conquer," ends here. There are two heroes: Fraser, a human on Ganymede and Theor, a native on Jupiter; they can only know each other by means of radio. While Theor faces an overwhelming invasion of his country by another one, Fraser has to fight a battleship's crew which has taken over Ganymede. Each is instrumental in the other's ultimate victory. The author's Jovian culture is the best facet of the novel and would be nice to see in a future story.

NOVEL - 5

"The City That Grew in the Sea" is Keith Laumer's latest Relief story. This time the daring diplomat protects the interests of the inhabitants of a watery world from unscrupulous Terrans.

SHORT STORY - d

E.E. Smith, Ph.D., launches a new series in the next If with a novella, "The Imperial Stars."

Subscription rates: 10 issues for \$1.00, 22 issues for \$2.00, 45 issues for \$4.00. Advertisements are five cents per word, minimum remittance \$1.00. Back issues are ten cents per copy; all are available.

PUBLISHER:

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW
Box 1568
San Diego, California 92112
U.S.A.

OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES:

Kenneth F. Slater
75 Norfolk Street
Wisbech, Cambs.
England

Graham Stone
Box 185, P.O.
Manuka, A.C.T.
Australia

SPECIAL REVIEW

LIMBO, by Bernard Wolfe. Ace, N.Y. A-3, 1963. 413 pp. 75¢

LIMBO is the story of a Dr. Martine, who, after the Third World War, is left on an uncharted island with some natives originally from Africa. One day his island is discovered and explored by some of those people left of the American population. Calling themselves the Inland Strippers, they are representative of the post-war civilization. Martine decides that he must leave the island and explore the Inland Strip. He leaves surreptitiously and makes his way there. The rest of the book is concerned with his adventures there, a device which enables the author to explore the ideas of the new civilization.

Unfortunately, despite the equivocal raves on the cover, this reprint is not satisfying. It is the type of novel which explores an extrapolated civilization, and unearths ideas concerning human development and faults. However, the few ideas presented are badly described, and the reader finishes the book with the feeling of having absorbed little. One normally expects to be left thinking, even though the writing style may be lacking, but here there is no stimulation of the mind. The time spent reading could be devoted to better books, of which there are many. —Bill Pond

THE CHRONOSCOPE

Featured in the next issue will be an article by John Carnell, editor of the British magazines New Worlds and Science Fantasy, giving the reasons for the imminent folding of those magazines. Books reviewed will include CHILDHOOD'S END by Arthur C. Clarke and DOUBLE STAR by Robert A. Heinlein.

THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY, ed. by John W. Campbell, Jr. Berkley-Medallion, N.Y. F875, 1964. 192 pp. 50¢

THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY consists of eight stories reprinted from the twenty-three story anthology of the same name published in 1952. Included in this reprint are "Vault of the Beast," by A.E. van Vogt, which concerns an alien scientist who becomes trapped in a Martian time vault (C), and "First Contact," by Murray Leinster, a story about the initial meeting between two somewhat similar races (D). This story could have been a great deal better if it were not for the amount of moralizing which tended to get in the way of the plot. The remainder of the stories are rated at one "D," two "E's," one "c," and two "d's."

—Marshall Hurlich

Many thanks to P. Schuyler Miller for the favorable review of Science Fiction Review in the March issue of Analog.

THE SECRET PEOPLE, by John Beynon Harris. Lancer, N.Y. 72-701, 1964. 175 pp. 50¢

The author, who also writes under the pseudonym of John Wyndham, wrote this, his first novel, in 1930. The book first appeared in the U.S.A. in Famous Fantastic Mysteries for April, 1950, after several European printings.

After falling through a deep chasm, Mark Sunnet and Margaret Lawn are soon captured by white-skinned pygmies. Having been separated upon imprisonment, their individual attempts to escape are described in this book. In addition to being somewhat dated, the story tends to be melodramatic and contains unnecessary description which hampers the reader's enjoyment of the novel.

NOVEL - 8

—Lawrence Beckwith